BOOK DESIGN◆TAKAHASHI JUNZI

竹光侍

His sword must be bamboo!

一

【作】永福一成
松本大洋

BIG SPIRITS COMICS SPECIAL

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竹光侍

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小学館
BCS1034

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【作】永福一成

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江戸のかたぎ長屋。
ある日、住みついた浪人 瀬能宗一郎。
剣の腕は立つが素頓狂。
何を起こすか、起こさぬか!?

【背光後】第一巻

竹光侍

His sword must be bamboo!

たけみつざむらい

一

TAKEMITSU ZAMURAI

ART BY
MATSUMOTO
TAIYOU
STORY BY
EIFUKU ISSEI

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松本大洋
【作】永福一成
【写真】保坦孝幸

BIG SPIRITS COMICS SPECIAL

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【第四話】剣豪心得　其の一――六七
【第五話】剣豪心得　其の二――八五
【第六話】矢　場――一〇五
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【第九話】秋近し――一六一
【第十話】玉の緒――一七九
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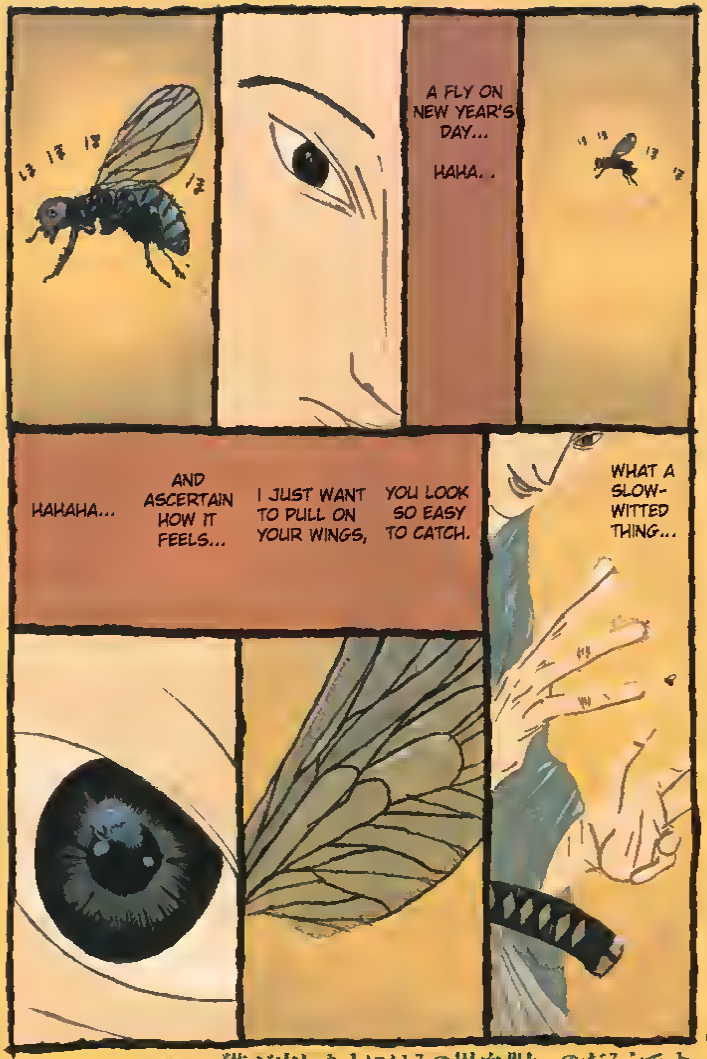

A FLY ON NEW YEAR'S DAY...
HAHA..
WHAT A SLOW-WITTED THING...
YOU LOOK SO EASY TO CATCH.
I JUST WANT TO PULL ON YOUR WINGS,
AND ASCERTAIN HOW IT FEELS...
HAHAHA...

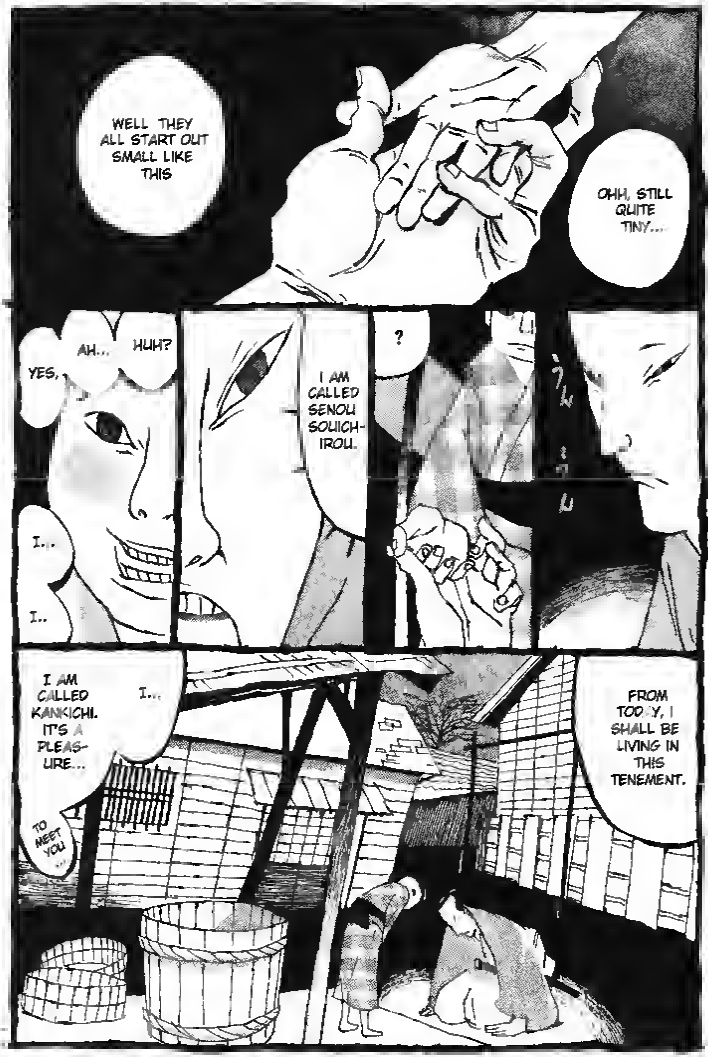
CHAPTER 1
THE CAT SAYS THAT THE STENCH OF BLOOD SURROUNDS THAT MAN.

THE FIRST TIME KANKICHI MET THE YOUNG SAMURAI WAS BEFORE THE CRACK OF DAWN ON THE COLD MORNING OF NEW YEAR'S DAY.
M...
MOM...
SEVEN AND A HALF IN THE MORNING
MOMMY!

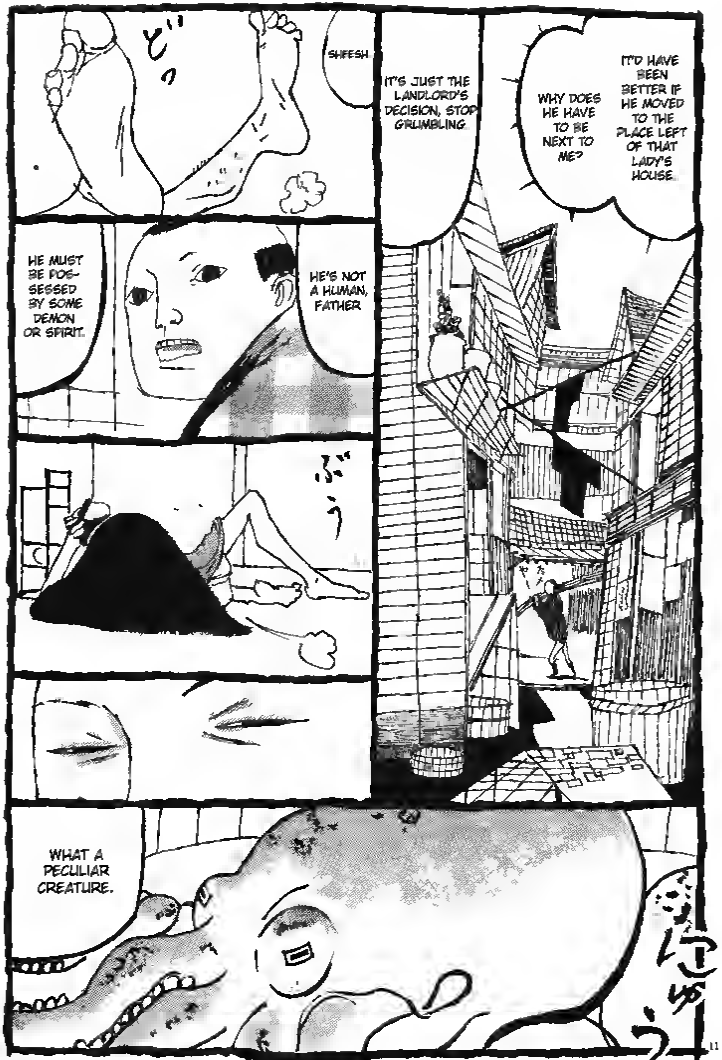
MMNN
ZZZ
!?
CREAK
CLACK

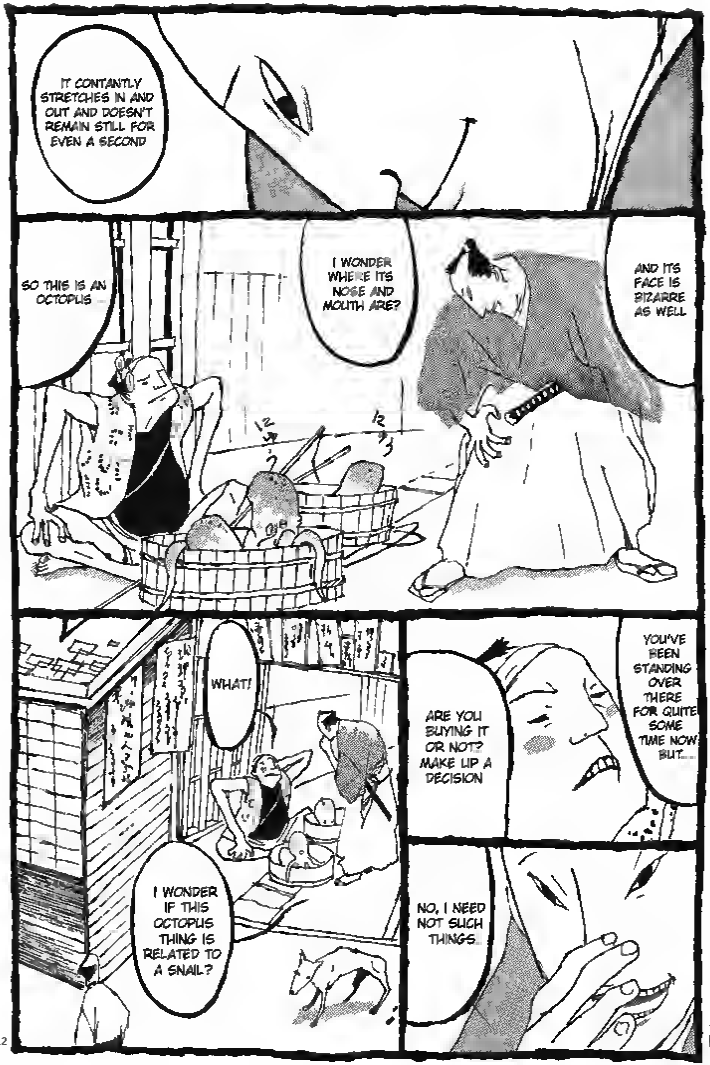
HYAA...
WELL, WELL ...
IT'S A KID.
YOU'RE SITTING ON THE GROUND ON YOUR BUM, YOU KNOW
AND YOU PISSED YOURSELF
HMPH.

IT'LL BE DRY BY NOON SO YOU CAN WEAR IT BY THEN...
IT'S FINE,
PFT.
SQUEEZE
I WONDER IF MAYBE THE CLUMSINESS STEMS FROM AN OVERSIZED HEAD IN COMPARISON TO THE REST OF THE BODY.
HMMM... KIDS SURE ARE POOR AT MOVING AND CONTROLLING THEIR BODIES...
SHOW ME YOUR HAND, KID!
?

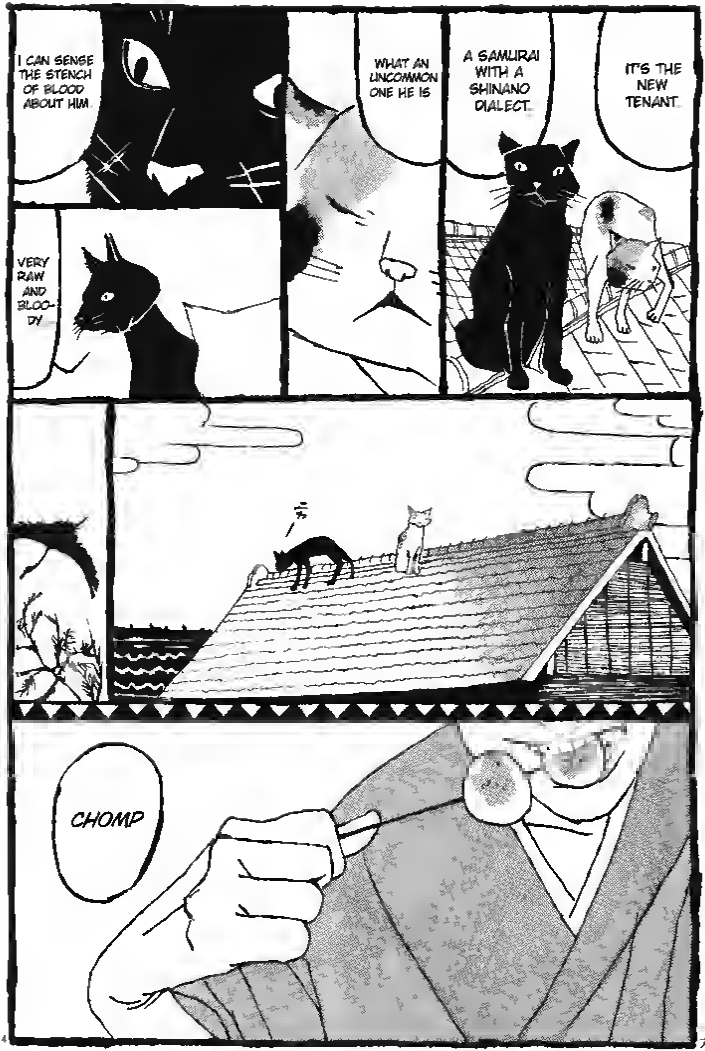

WELL THEY ALL START OUT SMALL LIKE THIS
OHH, STILL QUITE TINY...
AH... HUH?
YES,
I AM CALLED SENOU SOUICH-IROU.
?
I..
I..
I AM CALLED KANKICHI. IT'S A PLEAS-URE...
I...
TO MEET YOU...
FROM TODAY, I SHALL BE LIVING IN THIS TENEMENT.

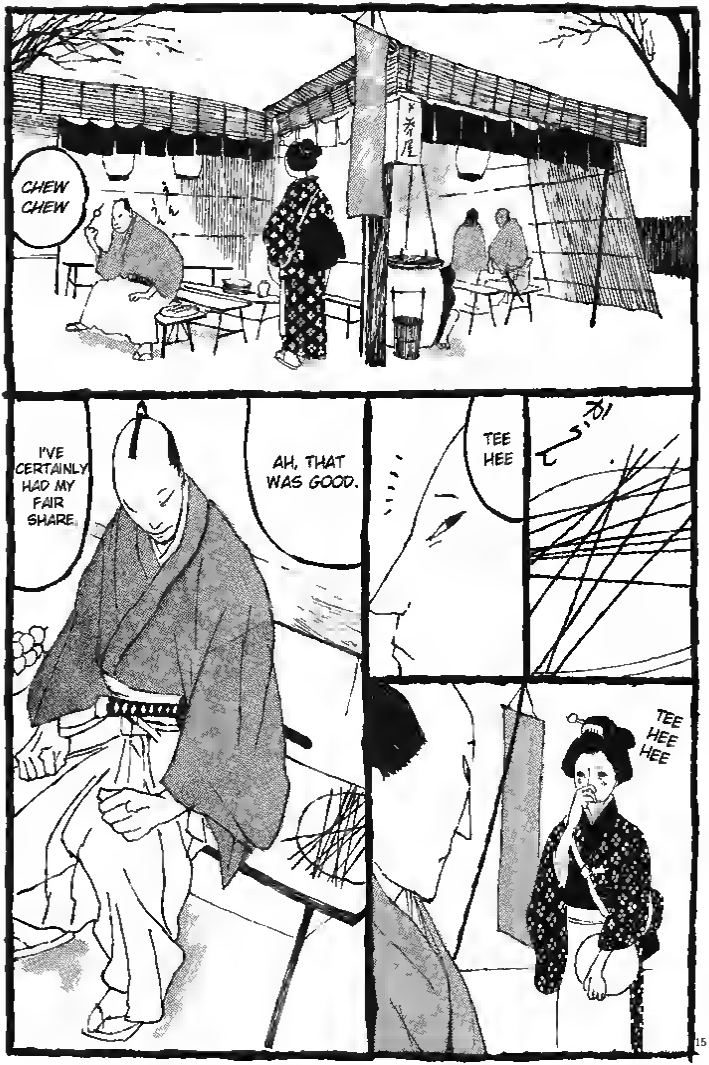
THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE WAS NOT AT A SHORT IN FINDING FLAWS TO CRITICIZE HIM.
THE RONIN BY THE NAME OF SENOU SOUICHIROU MADE HIS WAY AROUND THE TENEMENTS AND SAID THE PROPER GREETINGS BUT,
HE'S JUST SOME RONIN WITH NOT EVEN A FAMILY CREST.
HE MAY BE A SAMURAI BUT...
I'M ONLY SAYING THIS BECAUSE I KNOW FOR SURE HE'S NOT HERE RIGHT NOW.
SHUT UP.
HE'S LIKE A SUSPICIOUS STRAY DOG THAT CAME FROM GOD-KNOWS-WHERE
POKE
HE AIN'T NO PROPER SAMURAI
HUSH, HE COULD HEAR YOU DEAR


SHEESH
IT'S JUST THE LANDLORD'S DECISION, STOP GRUMBLING.
WHY DOES HE HAVE TO BE NEXT TO ME?
IT'D HAVE BEEN BETTER IF HE MOVED TO THE PLACE LEFT OF THAT LADY'S HOUSE.
HE'S NOT A HUMAN, FATHER
HE MUST BE POSSESSED BY SOME DEMON OR SPIRIT.
WHAT A PECULIAR CREATURE.

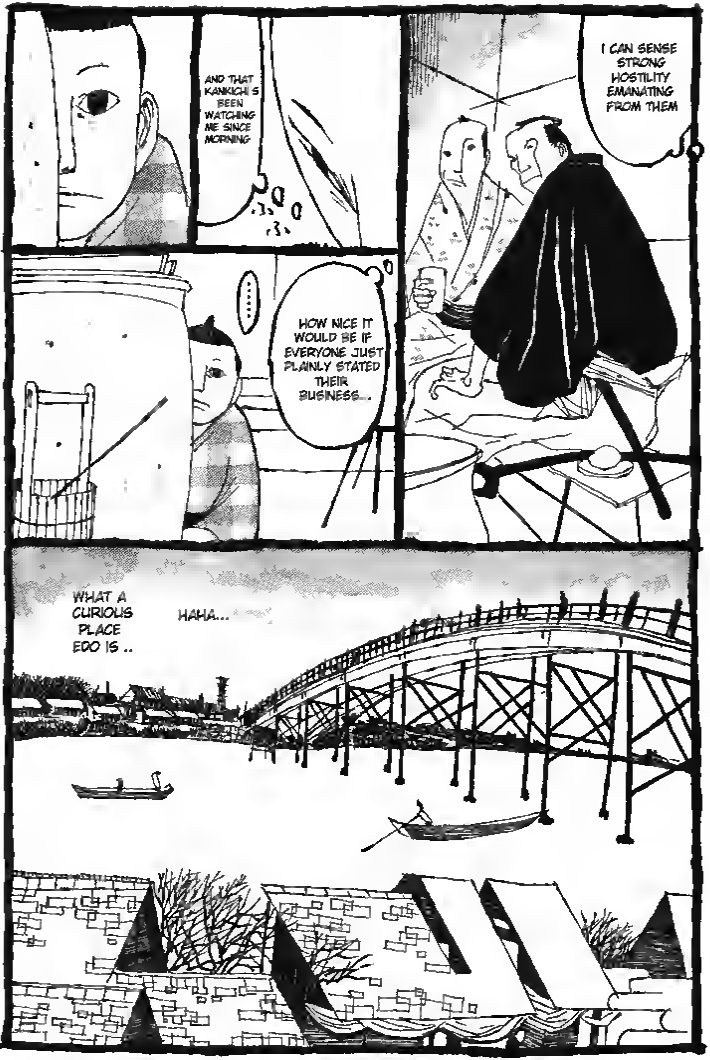

IT CONTANTLY STRETCHES IN AND OUT AND DOESN'T REMAIN STILL FOR EVEN A SECOND
SO THIS IS AN OCTOPUS
I WONDER WHERE ITS NOSE AND MOUTH ARE?
AND ITS FACE IS BIZARRE AS WELL
WHAT!
I WONDER IF THIS OCTOPUS THING IS RELATED TO A SNAIL?
ARE YOU BUYING IT OR NOT? MAKE UP A DECISION
YOU'VE BEEN STANDING OVER THERE FOR QUITE SOME TIME NOW BUT...
NO, I NEED NOT SUCH THINGS.

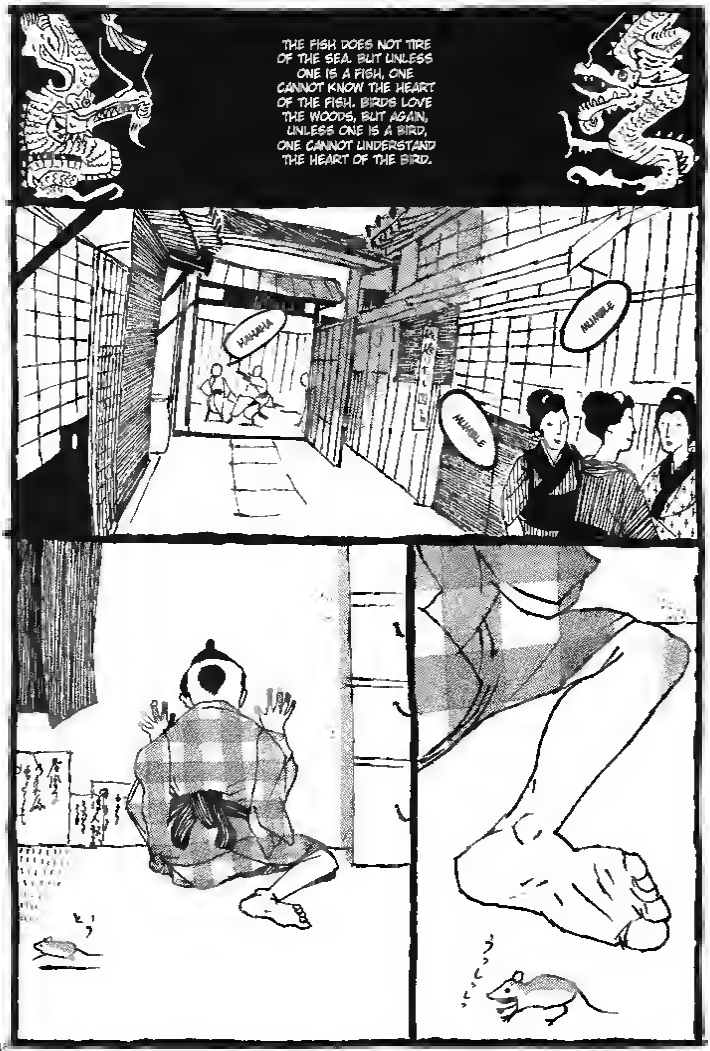
SO HOW DOES ONE EAT THIS OCTOPUS?
PLEASE DON'T GROUP THEM TOGETHER.
BUT EVEN SO, THERE'S SOMETHING ADORABLE ABOUT HIM.
DON'T YOU THINK HE'S RATHER STRANGE?
BEING SO AMAZED OVER AN OCTOPUS
OLD LADY ENGYOU'S AT IT AGAIN
BAH!
HE'S BAD LUCK!
BAD LUCK?
DISASTER AND SORROW SURROUNDS! TO PERSONALLY INVITE THAT ONTO THYSELF
GO KILL YOURSELF!

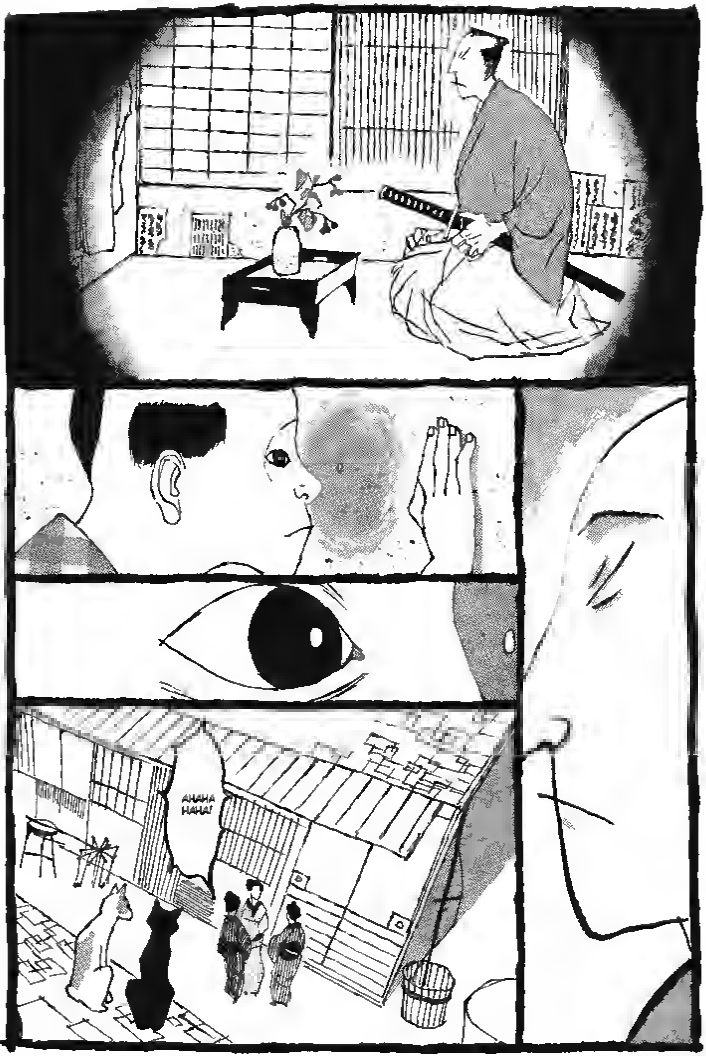

I CAN SENSE THE STENCH OF BLOOD ABOUT HIM
WHAT AN UNCOMMON ONE HE IS
A SAMURAI WITH A SHINANO DIALECT.
IT'S THE NEW TENANT.
VERY RAW AND BLOODY
CHOMP


CHEW CHEW
I'VE CERTAINLY HAD MY FAIR SHARE.
AH, THAT WAS GOOD.
TEE HEE
TEE HEE HEE

MY FATHER HATED THAT I HAD A SWEET TOOTH.
WHEN I EAT SWEET THINGS
I'M THE TYPE TO BE HAPPY
HE SAID IT WOULD JUST MAKE ME FAT AND DULL MY FIGHTING SPIRIT..
HAHA... WHAT A STRICT PERSON HE WAS...
THE TWO PEOPLE BEHIND...

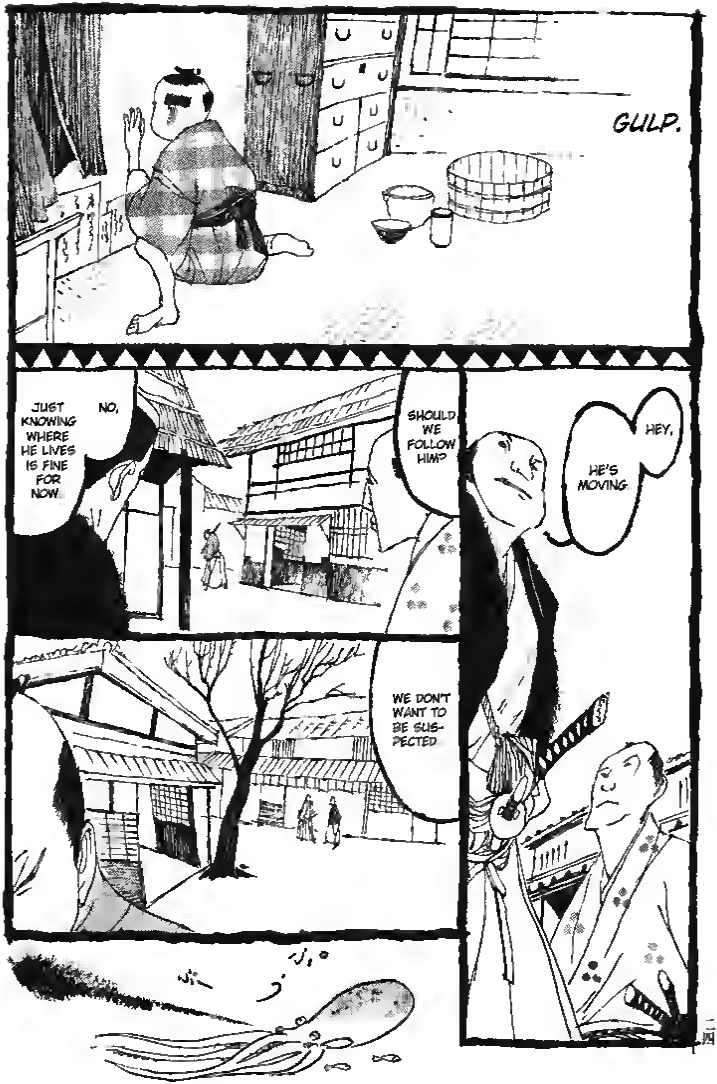

AND THAT KANKICHI'S BEEN WATCHING ME SINCE MORNING
I CAN SENSE STRONG HOSTILITY EMANATING FROM THEM
HOW NICE IT WOULD BE IF EVERYONE JUST PLAINLY STATED THEIR BUSINESS...
WHAT A CURIOUS PLACE EDO IS ..
HAHA...

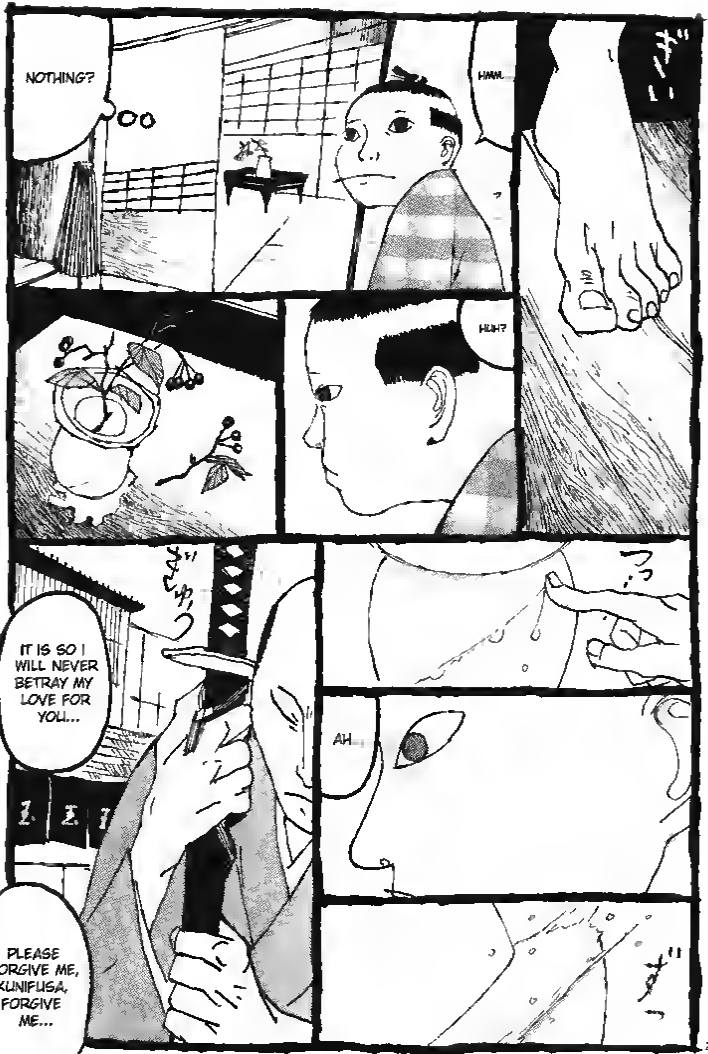

THE FISH DOES NOT TIRE OF THE SEA. BUT UNLESS ONE IS A FISH, ONE CANNOT KNOW THE HEART OF THE FISH. BIRDS LOVE THE WOODS, BUT AGAIN, UNLESS ONE IS A BIRD, ONE CANNOT UNDERSTAND THE HEART OF THE BIRD.
HAHAHA
MUMBLE
MUMBLE

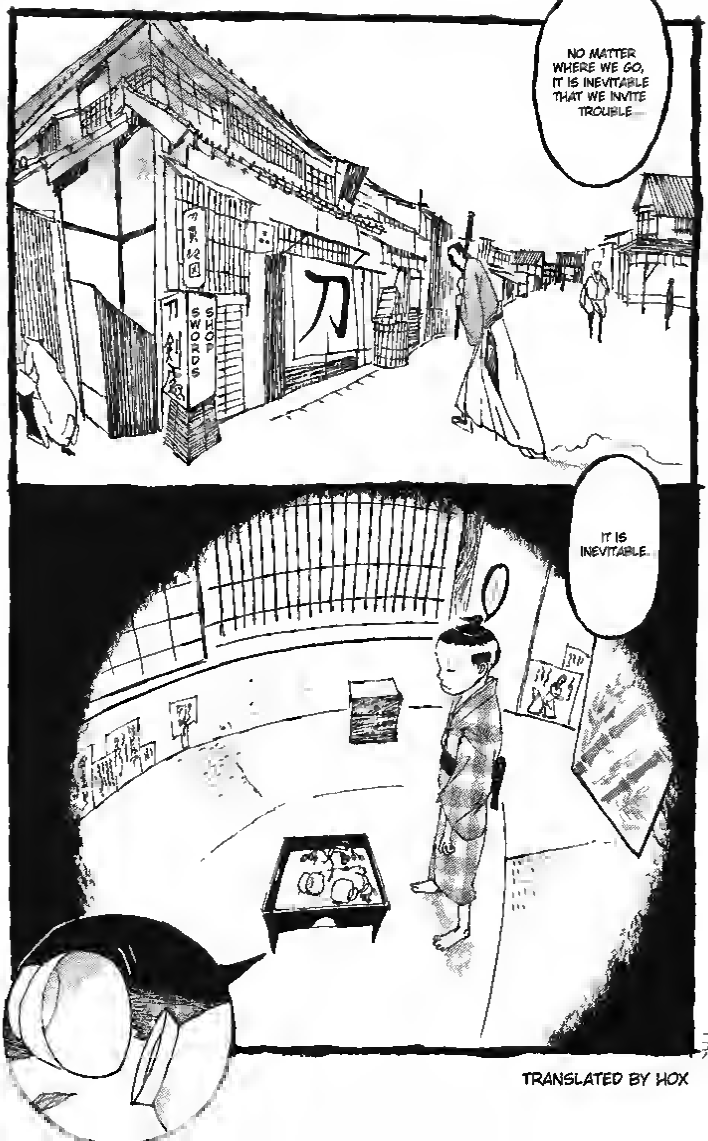

AHAHA
HAHA!

AH
ooo

どん？
MM...
HMM.
YOU TRULY ARE BEAUTIFUL.
HAH...
SO UNTHINKABLY BEAUTIFUL...
COMPARED TO ALL ELSE IN THIS WORLD
にい


GULP.
HEY,
HE'S MOVING
SHOULD WE FOLLOW HIM?
NO,
JUST KNOWING WHERE HE LIVES IS FINE FOR NOW.
WE DON'T WANT TO BE SUSPECTED.


NOTHING?
HMM.
HUH?
AH...
IT IS SO I WILL NEVER BETRAY MY LOVE FOR YOU...
PLEASE FORGIVE ME, KUNIFUSA, FORGIVE ME...



TRANSLATED BY HOX

CHAPTER 2 MONONOKE AND BAMBOO SWORD

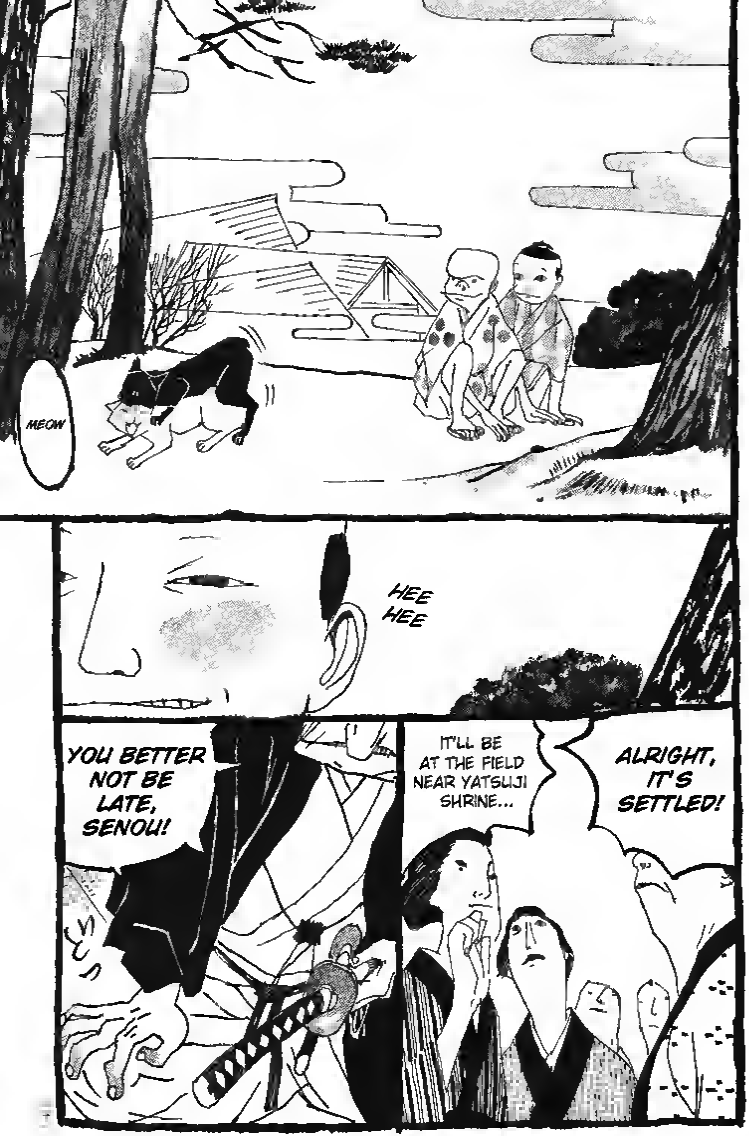
2 THE KID IS READING THE SIGN HERE BUT I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THE SIGN MEANS DUE TO MY POOR JAPANESE

THAT SAMURAI'S BEEN WANDERING FROM PLACE TO PLACE AIMLESSLY SINCE NOON.
HEY KAN, IF YOU BEND OVER LIKE THIS, YOU CAN SEE YOUR OWN BUTTHOLE, HEEHEE.
PSH.
I ALSO SAW HIM STARING OUT BY LOOKING AT JUST A FLY.
HERE, KITTY KITTY.

YOU CAN UNDERSTAND HUMAN WORDS, RIGHT?
EVEN THOUGH YOU UNDERSTAND, YOU PRETEND YOU DON'T, RIGHT?
WHA...
WHAT'S UP WITH THIS GUY?
DON'T MAKE EYECONTACT
DASH
AH...
HEYY!
.....

THE MOVEMENTS OF A CAT ARE SO DIFFERENT FROM A HUMAN'S, VERY BEAUTIFUL.
OH, IS THAT SO...
WELL, HELLO LADIES!
IS SENOU SOUICHIROU PRESENT?
WE KNOW YOU'RE LIVING OUT HERE IN ONE OF THESE SHABBY HOMES!
COME OUT, SENOU!!!
HMM?

OH, FOUND YOU SENOU, YOU FOX-FACE!
WE'RE FROM THE NAGAYAMA DOJO OF KINSUKE VILLAGE. YOU CAN PROBABLY GUESS WHY WE'RE HERE.
AH, THE KENDO SCHOOL OF NAGAYAMA THAT I MATCHED AGAINST BEFORE.
SO THESE MEN WERE THE ONE WHO WERE FOLLOWING ME YEST-ERDAY.
THEY'VE GOT QUITE THE MOUTH ON THEM.
D-DID YOU JUST LAUGH AT US!?
COME. PLEASE COME INSIDE.
HEE HEE HEE HEE ...
SLAM


MEOW
HEE HEE
YOU BETTER NOT BE LATE, SENOU!
IT'LL BE AT THE FIELD NEAR YATSUJI SHRINE...
ALRIGHT, IT'S SETTLED!

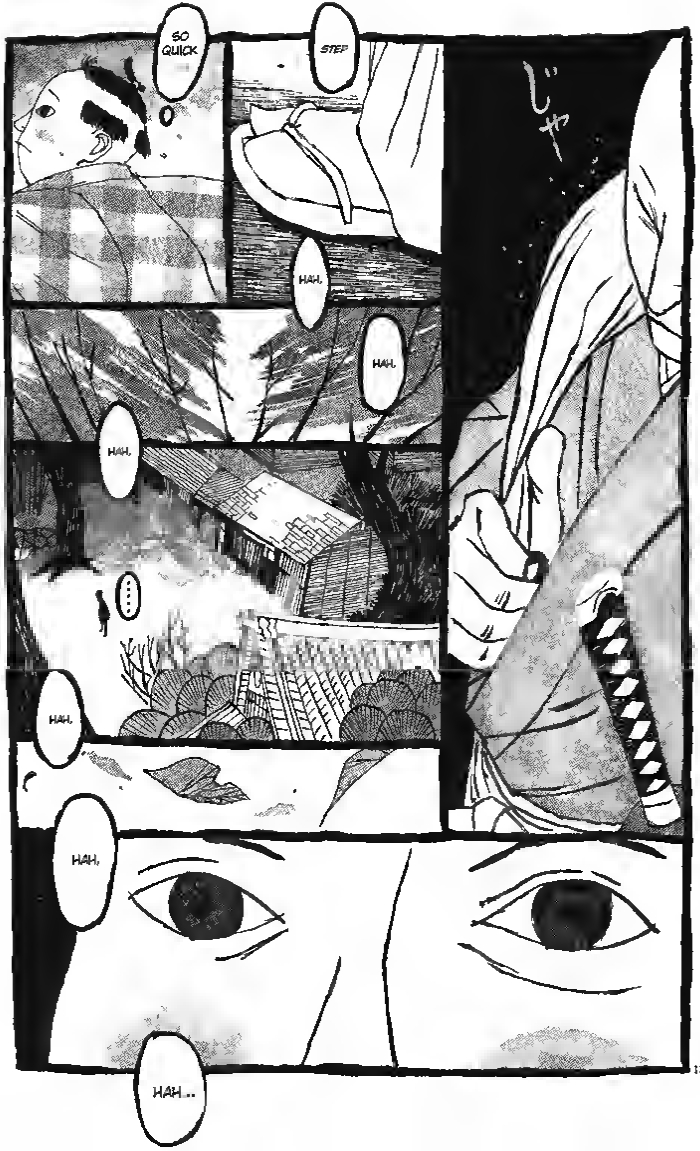
MOVE IT!
IT'S ALWAYS LIKE THIS.
HMPH.
THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT ME THAT JUST CALLS FORTH TROUBLE
FATHER SAID IT WAS THE BLOOD...
GRIP

BLOOD...
WHAT IS IT?
WHAT HAPP-ENED?

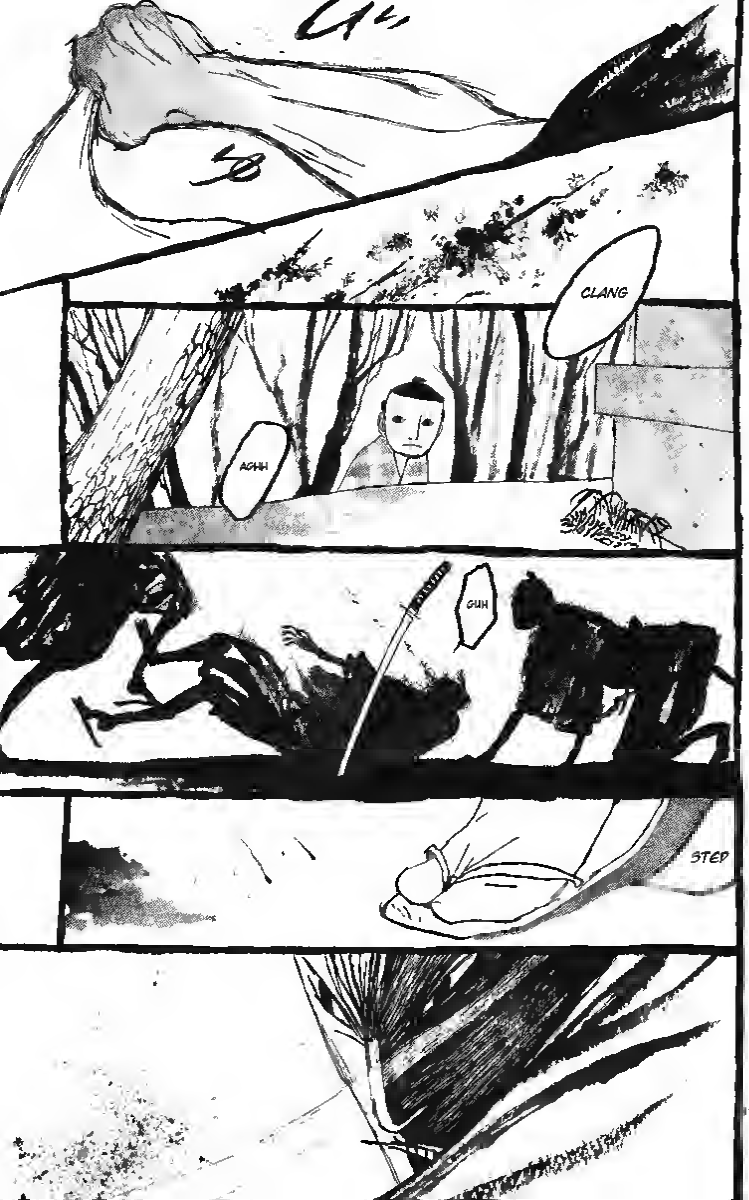
GIGGLE GIGGLE
TRUK E TRUK E
SHAKE
SHAKE
SLIDE
THUMP

WHAT A FRIGHTEN-ING FACE...
STEP
JUST WHERE

IS HE GOING TO?
MNN
JANGLE
ROCKS?
JANGLE

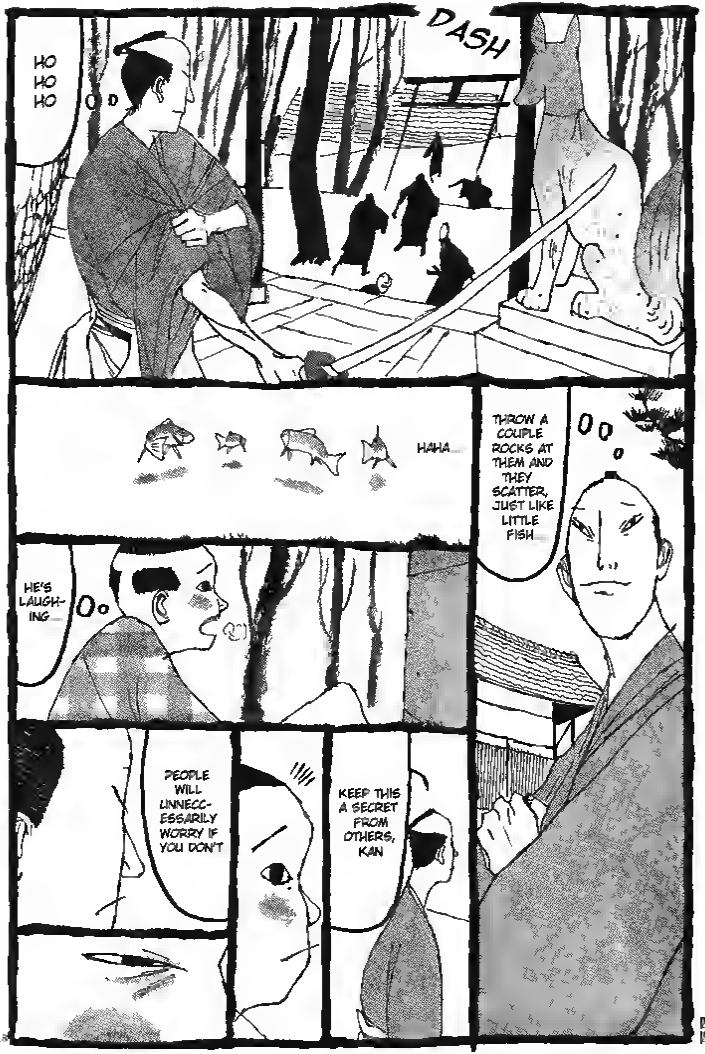

SO QUICK
STEP
HAH.
HAH.
HAH.
HAH.
HAH.
HAH...

?
ばきっ
AGHHH
GYAA
GAH
UGH
AHH
SWING

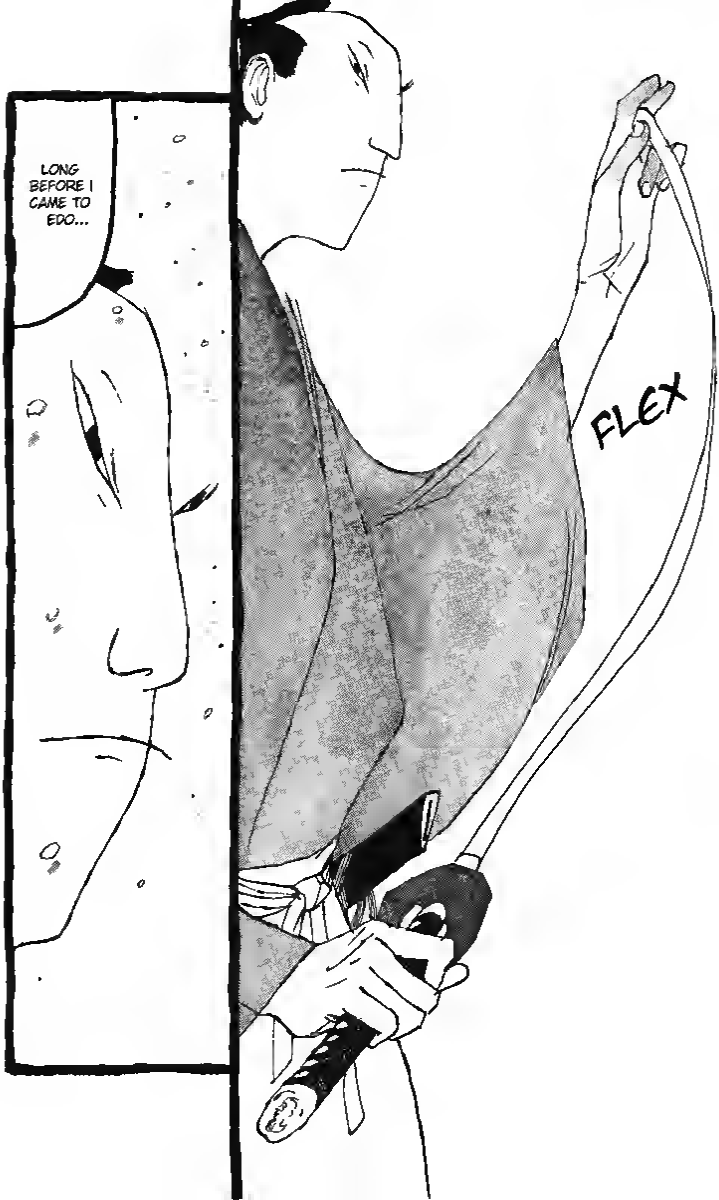

CLANG
AGHH
GUH
STEP

EEK!!!
GAAH
ACK
GRIP
THEN I SHALL DO SO!
WHY WON'T YOU DRAW YOUR SWORD, SENOU!!!
COWARD!!

SHEATH
DIE!


HO HO HO
DASH
THROW A COUPLE ROCKS AT THEM AND THEY SCATTER, JUST LIKE LITTLE FISH
HAHA
HE'S LAUGH-ING
PEOPLE WILL UNNECC-ESSARILY WORRY IF YOU DON'T
KEEP THIS A SECRET FROM OTHERS, KAN

YOU SEEM POSSESSED.
SOMEONE ONCE SAID THOSE VERY SAME WORDS TO ME BEFORE.
すっ…
AH!
THAT'S HOW YOU LOOK TO ME.
……


LONG BEFORE I CAME TO EDO...
FLEX

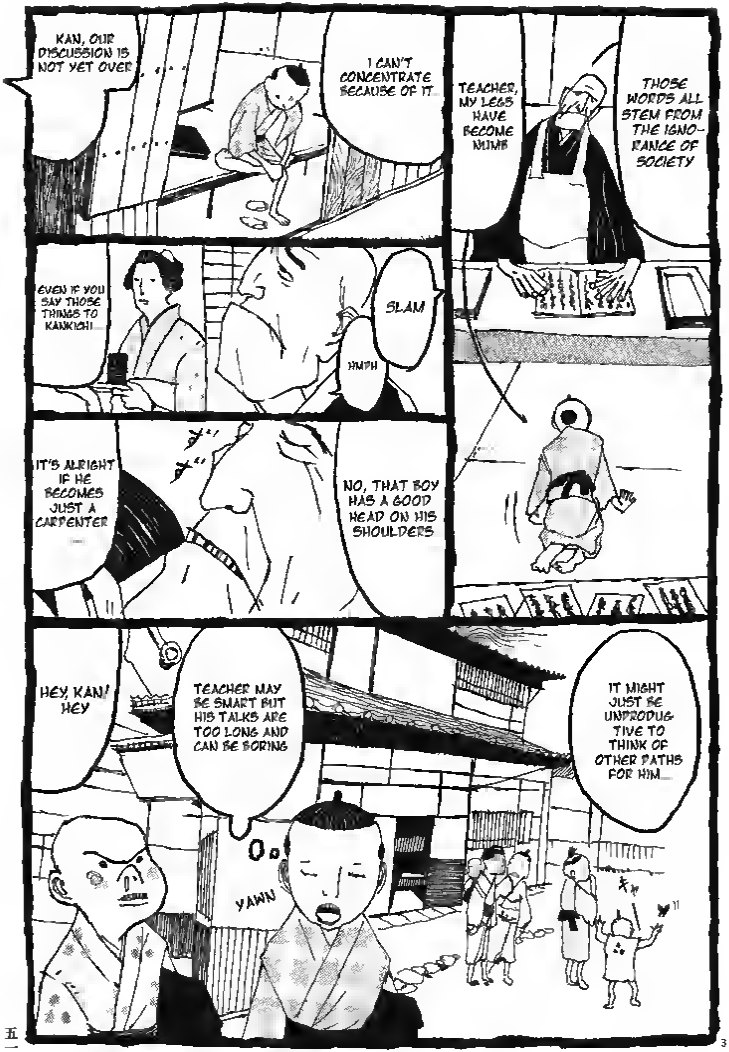
I WAS TOLD THAT BY SOMEBODY WHOM I LOVED ABOVE ALL ELSE.
CHING

TRANSLATED BY HOX

CHAPTER 3

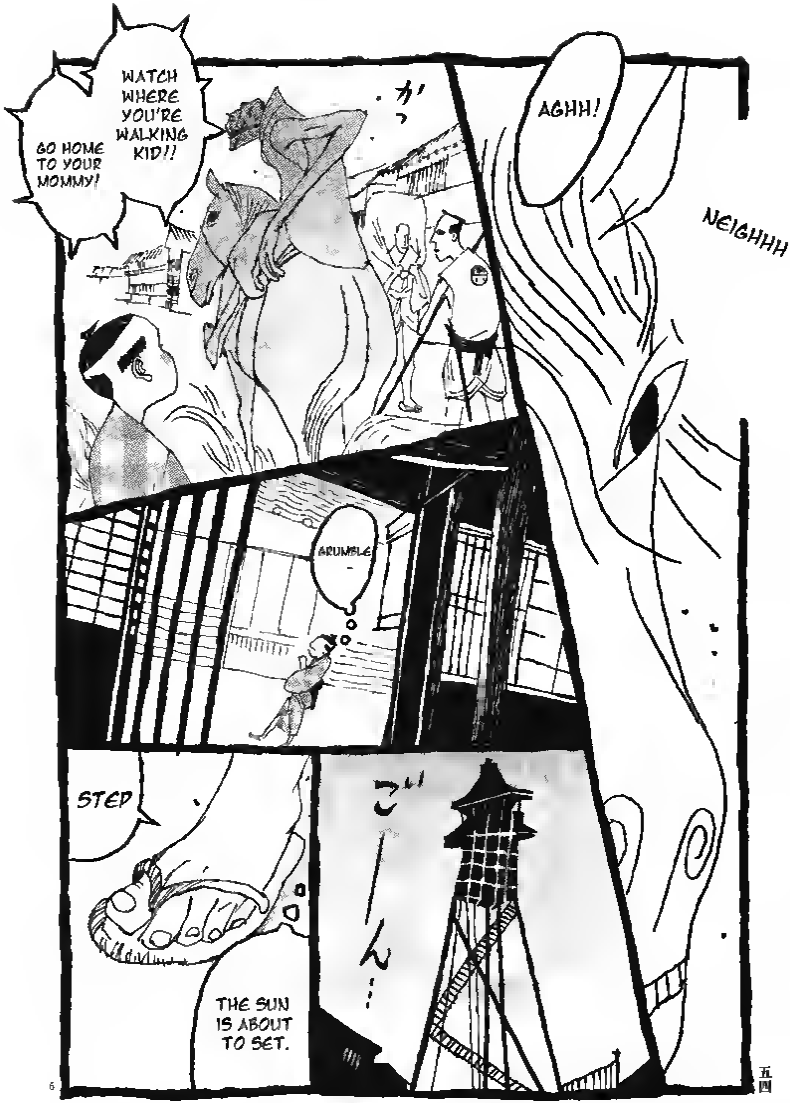
BUTTERFLY

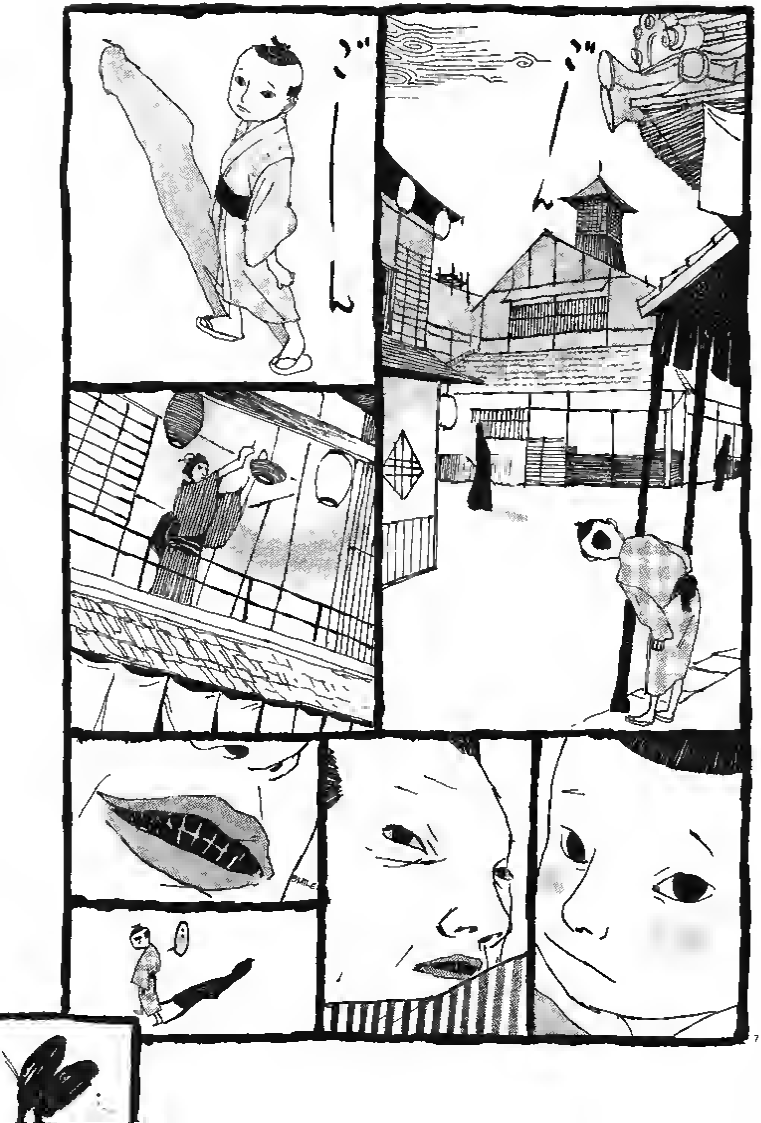
KANKICHI'S TEACHER, HOGA, WAS A WELL LEARNED MAN, AND HE WAS NOT OF THE TYPE TO BELIEVE IN SUCH THINGS AS SPIRITS, MONSTERS, AND GHOSTS THAT WERE WIDELY BELIEVED BY OTHERS AT THAT TIME.
ONLY BY STEADILY PUSHING AWAY IGNORANCE CAN THE ROAD TO UNDERSTANDING BE OPENED.
TEACHER
IT IS BECAUSE THEY ARE TRAPPED BY AVIDYA'S DARKNESS AS THEY CONCERN THEMSELVES ONLY WITH TRIVIAL DAILY MATTERS AND UNDERSTAND NOT OF BUDDHA'S TEACHINGS
I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IF THERE ARE SUCH THINGS AS MONSTERS IN THIS WORLD?
HMM?
THERE ARE NO SUCH THINGS.


KAN, OUR DISCUSSION IS NOT YET OVER
I CAN'T CONCENTRATE BECAUSE OF IT
TEACHER, MY LEGS HAVE BECOME NUMB
THOSE WORDS ALL STEM FROM THE IGNORANCE OF SOCIETY
EVEN IF YOU SAY THOSE THINGS TO KANKICHI
SLAM
HMPH
IT'S ALRIGHT IF HE BECOMES JUST A CARPENTER
NO, THAT BOY HAS A GOOD HEAD ON HIS SHOULDERS
HEY, KAN! HEY
TEACHER MAY BE SMART BUT HIS TALKS ARE TOO LONG AND CAN BE BORING
YAWN
IT MIGHT JUST BE UNPRODUCTIVE TO THINK OF OTHER PATHS FOR HIM

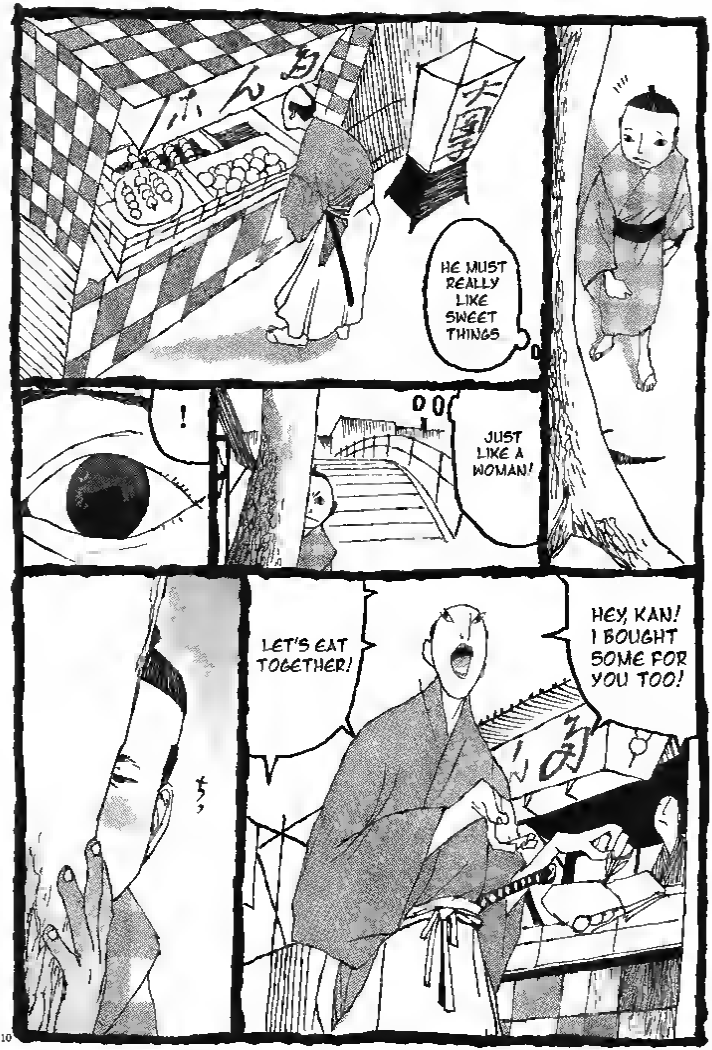
YOU KNOW?
HE MAY BE NICE BUT TOO BAD HE'S AN IDIOT.
YOUR NOSE BEGINS TO RUN AND YOUR BELLY KIND OF STICKS OUT.
UMM,
YOU KNOW WHEN YOU'RE HUNGRY... YOU GET THAT...
SNIFF
LIKE THOSE CATS LIVING BEHIND
HUH?
YOSHIROU, CAN YOU HOLD THIS FOR ME AND GO HOME EARLY?
SNIFF
BUT WHERE YA GOING, KAN?
AND TELL MY MOM THAT I'LL BE BACK SOON.

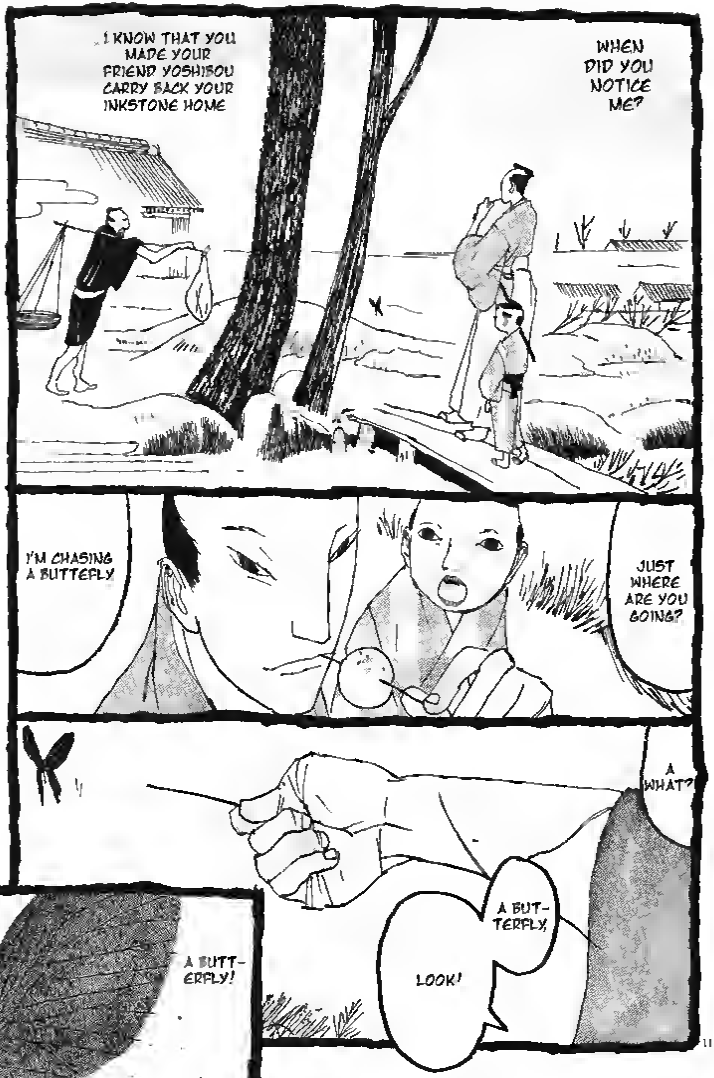
HE'S SMILING WHILE HE'S WALKING
WHAT IS HE SAYING?
HE'S EMBARRASSING
EVERYONE'S STARING AT HIM.


WATCH WHERE YOU'RE WALKING KID!!
GO HOME TO YOUR MOMMY!
AGHH!
NEIGHHH
GRUMBLE
STEP
THE SUN IS ABOUT TO SET.

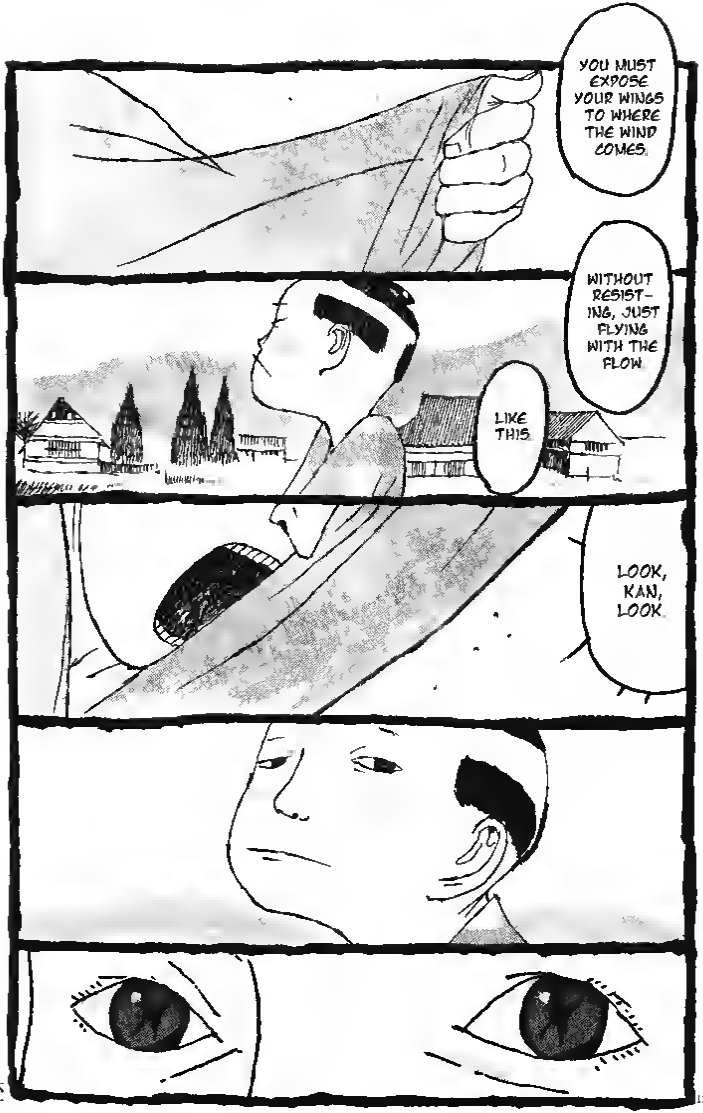

ごーーーん
ごーん

HMM, LOOKS I CAME PRETTY FAR OUT
I'M GETTING HUNGRY

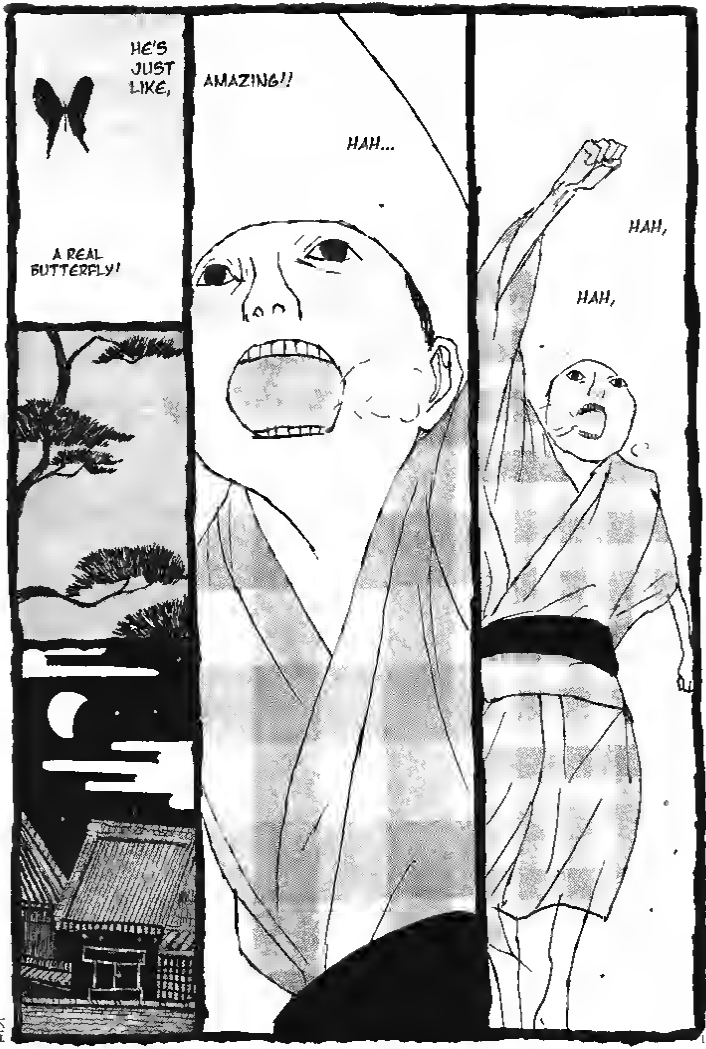

HE MUST REALLY LIKE SWEET THINGS
!
JUST LIKE A WOMAN!
HEY, KAN! I BOUGHT SOME FOR YOU TOO!
LET'S EAT TOGETHER!


...I KNOW THAT YOU MADE YOUR FRIEND YOSHISOU CARRY BACK YOUR INKSTONE HOME
WHEN DID YOU NOTICE ME?
I'M CHASING A BUTTERFLY
JUST WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
A WHAT?
A BUT-TERFLY, LOOK!
A BUTT-ERFLY!

SO VERY MAGNIFICENTLY BEAUTIFUL.
ALL THINGS OF NATURE ARE SO BEAUTIFUL WITHOUT A SINGLE UNWASTED THING
I WONDER HOW IT IS ON THE INSIDE?
IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S BONES ARE FOLDED
ALRIGHT, YOU TRY CATCHING THE WIND TOO NOW, KAN
HMM?
FLAP FLAP
FLAP FLAP
HAHAHA, THAT'S CUTE.
TRY IMITATING THE BUTTERFLY
BUT YOU'RE DOING IT WRONG


YOU MUST EXPOSE YOUR WINGS TO WHERE THE WIND COMES.
WITHOUT RESIST-ING, JUST FLYING WITH THE FLOW.
LIKE THIS.
LOOK, KAN, LOOK.

YOU'RE A BUTTERFLY!
A BUT-TERFLY!
DASH

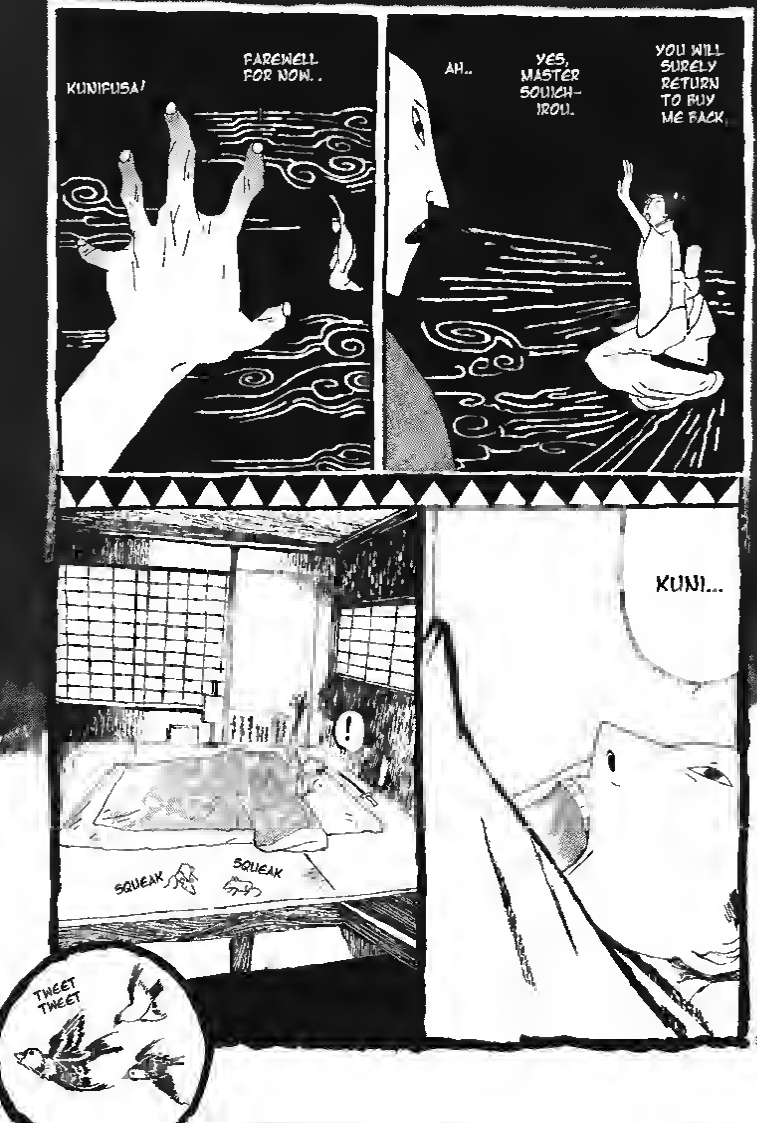

HE'S JUST LIKE,
A REAL BUTTERFLY!
AMAZING!!
HAH...
HAH,
HAH,

ON THE WAY BACK HOME, KANKICHI HELD ONTO SOUICHIROU'S HAND AS THEY MADE THEIR WAY THROUGH UNFAMILIAR STREETS
ALWAYS HAVING HIS OWN WAY...
HAHA
COME ON, HURRY
SUMMER NEARS.

TRANSLATED BY HOX

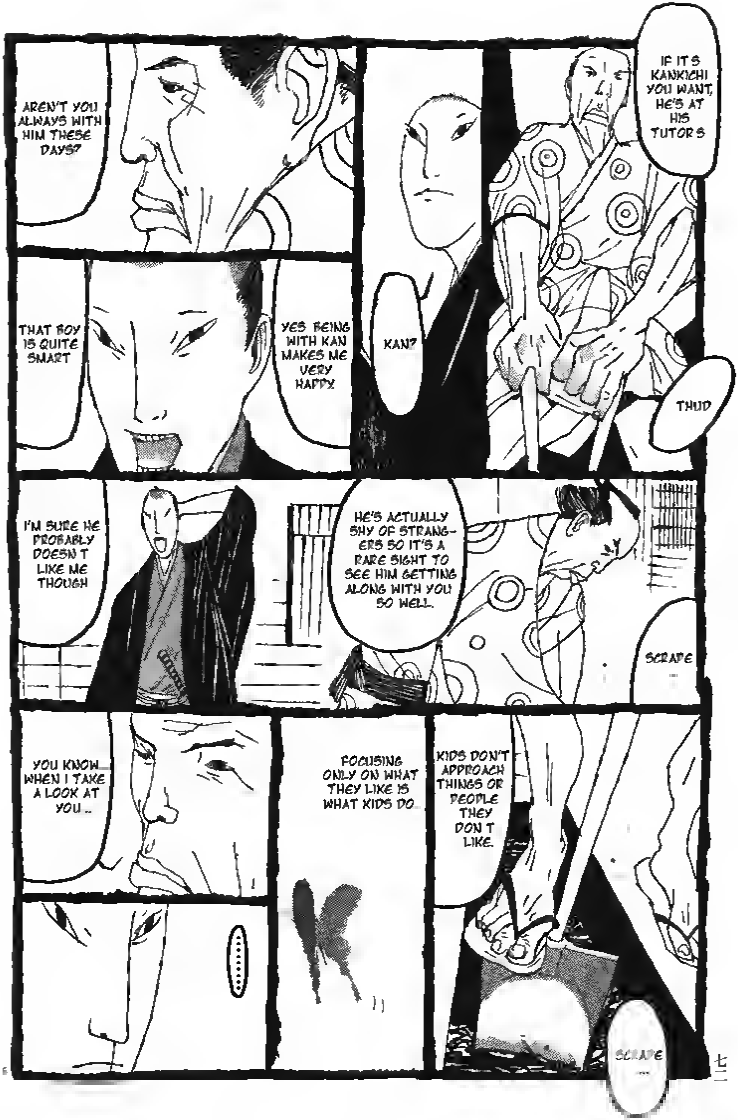
KUNIFUSA
A SHORTSWORD OF APPROXIMATELY 30CM.
さめざめ
WEEP
WEEP
WHOM MAY YOU BE?

WHY HAVE YOU COME BACK HERE?
HAST THOU ALREADY FORGOTTEN OF ME? 'TIS I, KUNIFUASA, THE SWORD THAT THOU SOLD OFF.
THAT IS,
DUE TO OUR UN-ESCAPABLE FATE...
YOU WILL SOON FEAR EVEN OF THE SIMPLE RINGS OF BELLS.
YOU TREMBLE TO THE WIND AND FEAR THE RUSTLING OF LEAVES,
EVER SINCE THOU HAST PARTED WITH ME,


KUNIFUSA!
FAREWELL FOR NOW..
AH..
YES, MASTER SOUICH-IROU.
YOU WILL SURELY RETURN TO BUY ME BACK.
KUNI...
!
SQUEAK
SQUEAK
TWEET TWEET

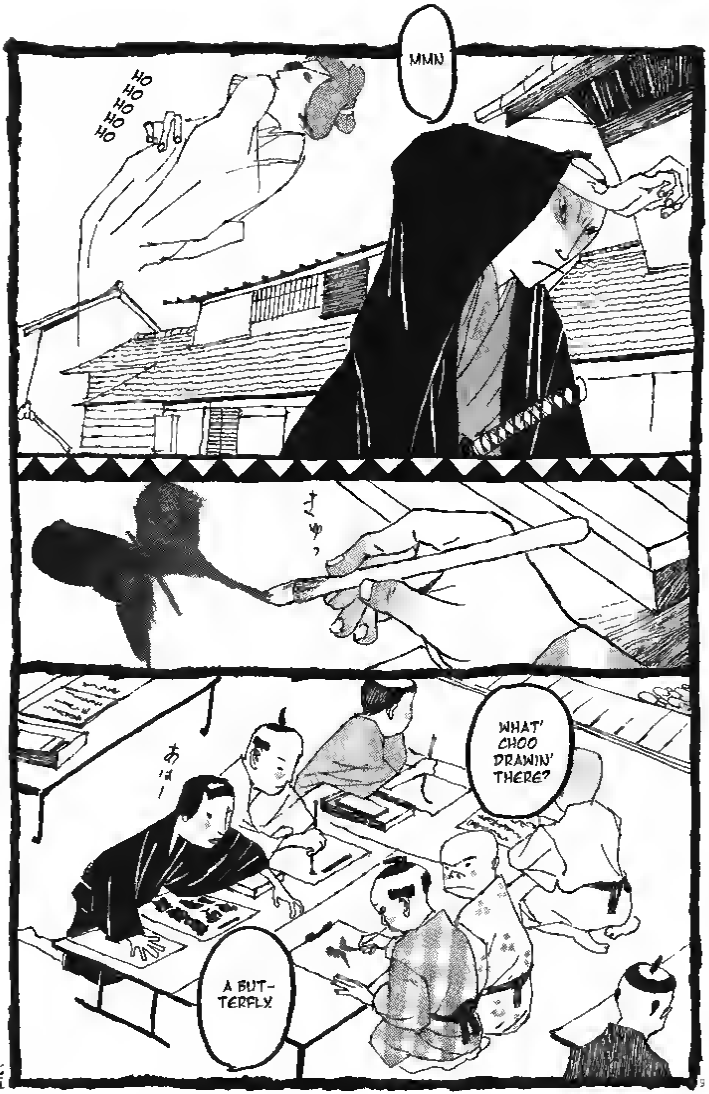
CHAPTER 4
– THE FIRST
THE SWORDSMAN'S HEART

SLIDE
!
GOOD MORNING SIR YOZAEMON
IT'S ALREADY NOON, MR SOUICHIROU.
ARE'N'T YOU QUITE LAZY ?
MANAGER YOZAEMON
QUITE IRRESPONSIBLE.
INDEED
YOUR RAGGED CLOTHES MAKE YOU LOOK SUSPICIOUS TOO
IT'S BETTER TO PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR ATTIRE.
IF YOU DRESS LIKE A HOMELESS, YOU MIGHT BECOME ONE SOMEDAY
YES


IF IT'S KANKICHI YOU WANT, HE'S AT HIS TUTOR'S
AREN'T YOU ALWAYS WITH HIM THESE DAYS?
KAN?
THUD
YES BEING WITH KAN MAKES ME VERY HAPPY
THAT BOY IS QUITE SMART
HE'S ACTUALLY SHY OF STRANGERS SO IT'S A RARE SIGHT TO SEE HIM GETTING ALONG WITH YOU SO WELL..
I'M SURE HE PROBABLY DOESN'T LIKE ME THOUGH
SCRAPE
KIDS DON'T APPROACH THINGS OR PEOPLE THEY DON'T LIKE.
FOCUSING ONLY ON WHAT THEY LIKE IS WHAT KIDS DO
YOU KNOW... WHEN I TAKE A LOOK AT YOU...
SCRAPE

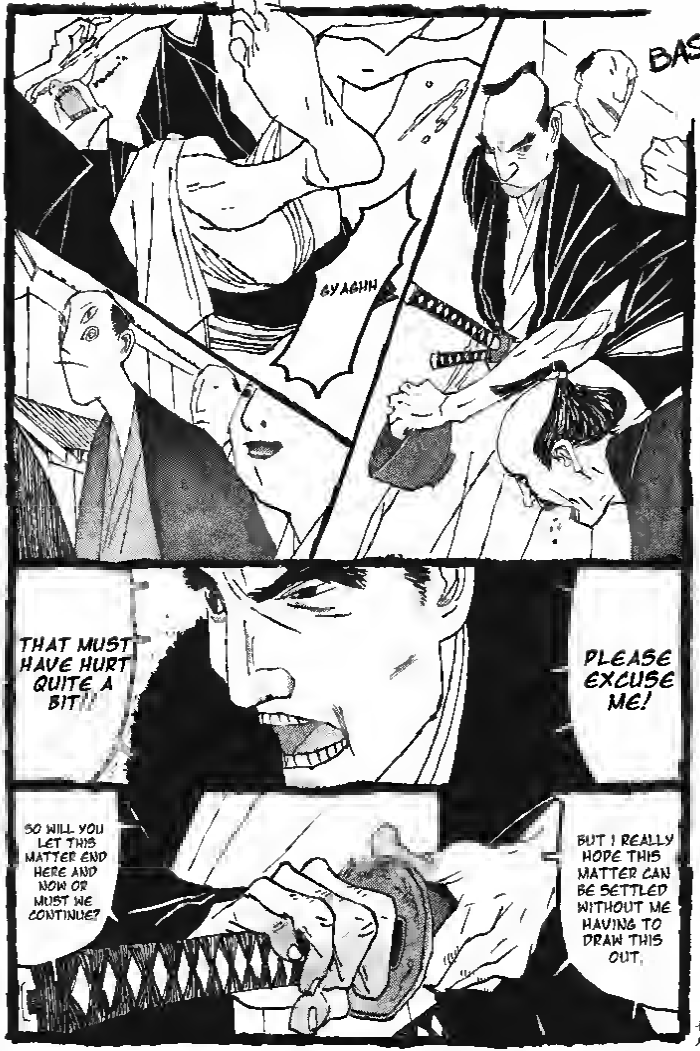
YES!
GOING TO THE TEAHOUSE?
AH, NEVER MIND
WE'LL TALK MORE NEXT TIME.
WELL, TAKE CARE THEN
YES SIR, I'LL BE OFF!
IT HAS BEEN 2 MONTHS SINCE SOUICHIROU HAS CAME TO EDO

HMM
SHOP
SWORDS
!
YOU WILL SURELY RETURN TO BUY ME BACK


MMM
WHAT' CHOO DRAWIN' THERE?
A BUT-TERFLY

HEY, THE CARE OF A LADY IS NEEDED IN A TEAHOUSE!!
RABBLE RABBLE
THIS DAUGHTER OF MINE IS NOT HERE TO SERVE THE GUESTS
IF IT'S TEA YOU WANT, I CAN SERVE YOU
SHUT UP, YOU DRIED UP OLD PRUNE OF A MAN! WE DON'T NEED YOUR SERVICES!
KYA
COME HERE, GIRL.
WELL, SHE MUST BE HERE TO DO SOMETHING IF SHE'S HERE IN THIS SHOP
MM

ARGH...
CEASE YOUR BEHAVIOUR AT ONCE. YOU ARE FRIGHTENING THE YOUNG LADY.
AND WHO THE HELL ARE YOU!?
I AM ISOZAKI MITSUHEITA.
WHAT ABOUT IT?
GRAB


BASH
GYAGHH
PLEASE EXCUSE ME!
THAT MUST HAVE HURT QUITE A BIT!!
BUT I REALLY HOPE THIS MATTER CAN BE SETTLED WITHOUT ME HAVING TO DRAW THIS OUT.
SO WILL YOU LET THIS MATTER END HERE AND NOW OR MUST WE CONTINUE?

.....
WHAT HAPPENED MASTER?
MASTER!!
SWEATING
IT WAS NOTHING LET US RETURN
THOSE EYEBROWS... THAT WAS ISOZAKI OF SHINKAGE RYU'S SCHOOL OF SWORDSMANSHIP
I HEARD HE WAS WORKING AS ONE OF THE TEACHERS THERE.
HE'S UNEXPECTEDLY YOUNG

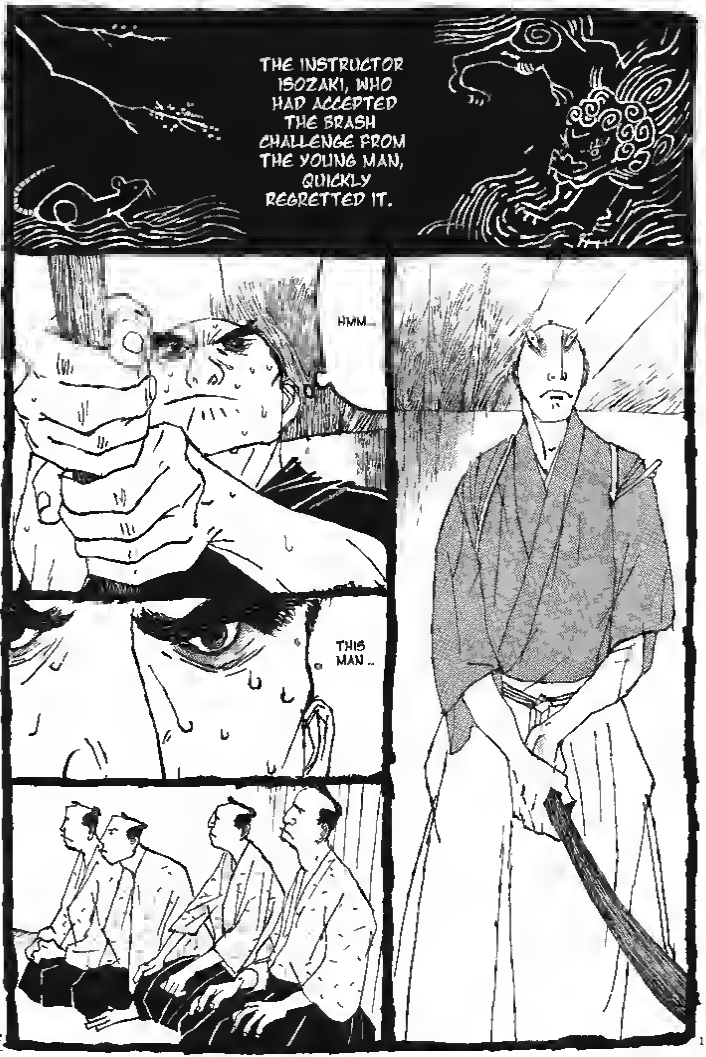
HAHAHA
CAN'T GO ANYWHERE
HAHAHA
STOP IT ALREADY
DID YOU SEE THE LOOKS ON THE TOWNS-FOLK?
WE HAVE FAITH THAT ONE DAY, YOU'LL EVEN BECOME THE BEST
SOME EVEN CALL YOU THE TOP FIVE SWORDSMEN OF THIS LAND
BUT MASTER'S NAME IS KNOWN ALL OVER IN EDO AS WELL

?
WHAT IS IT, SIR?
SOMEONE SEEN FOLLOWING US SINCE THE TEAHOUSE.
?
HEY, YOU!
DON'T BOTHER.
LET'S GO
HEE HEE

WHAT!!?
WRONG, WRONG, WRONG
YOU WISH TO DUEL WITH MASTER ISOZAKI?
YES!!
EVER SINCE SEEING HIM AT THE INCIDENT AT THE TEAHOUSE, I'VE ADMIRED HIM GREATLY

HE WANTS TO CHALLENGE THIS DOJO, HE MUST BE AIMING TO STEAL YOUR FAME
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
JUST GO BACK HOME!!
THERE HAVE BEEN MANY PEOPLE LIKE YOU RECENTLY TRYING TO EARN THEMSELVES A QUICK FAME THE MASTER IS MUCH TOO BUSY TO DEAL WITH THE LIKES OF YOU!
HE'S DESPERATE ENOUGH TO LOWER HIS HEAD TO THE GROUND?
AS I THOUGHT IT WAS HIM...
ISOZAKI HAPPENED TO BE IN A GOOD MOOD THAT DAY
SELF-STYLED
IT WAS MY FATHER WHO TAUGHT ME THE WAY OF THE SWORD HE WAS FROM THE SHINNUKI-RYU'S SCHOOL OF SWORDSMANSHIP BUT I CONSIDER MYSELF TO BE SELF-STYLED
HE LOOKS PITIFUL
FROM WHICH SCHOOL ARE YOU FROM?

TRANSLATED BY HOX


THE INSTRUCTOR ISOZAKI, WHO HAD ACCEPTED THE BRASH CHALLENGE FROM THE YOUNG MAN, QUICKLY REGRETTED IT.
HMM...
THIS MAN..

DRIP
GUH...

ばっ
うお
お
お
GRID

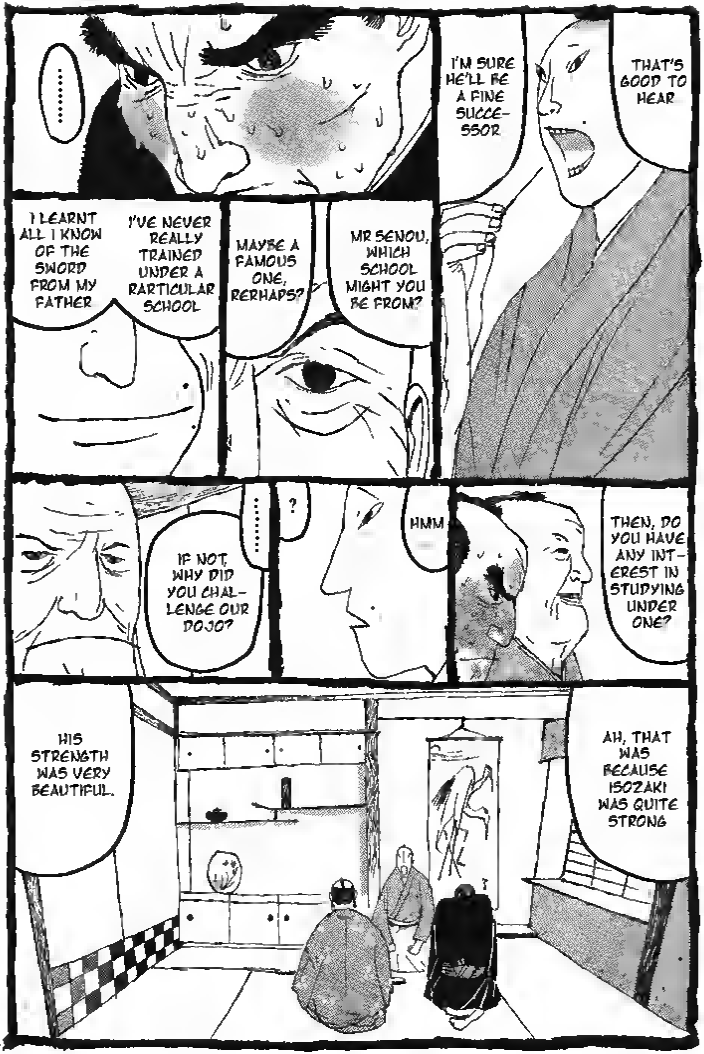
【第五話】
剣豪心得 其の一

THE OWNER OF THE DOJO, MIYAGAWA JINSAI, WAS RETURNING AFTER VISITING HIS ANCESTORS' GRAVES WITH HIS DAUGHTER OMAKI.
WHITE SAKE, HERE!

HMM?
WHITE SAKE
CREAK
NO, DOESN'T LOOK LIKE IT...
HMM, ARE THEY TAKING A BREAK?
WHA,
STEP

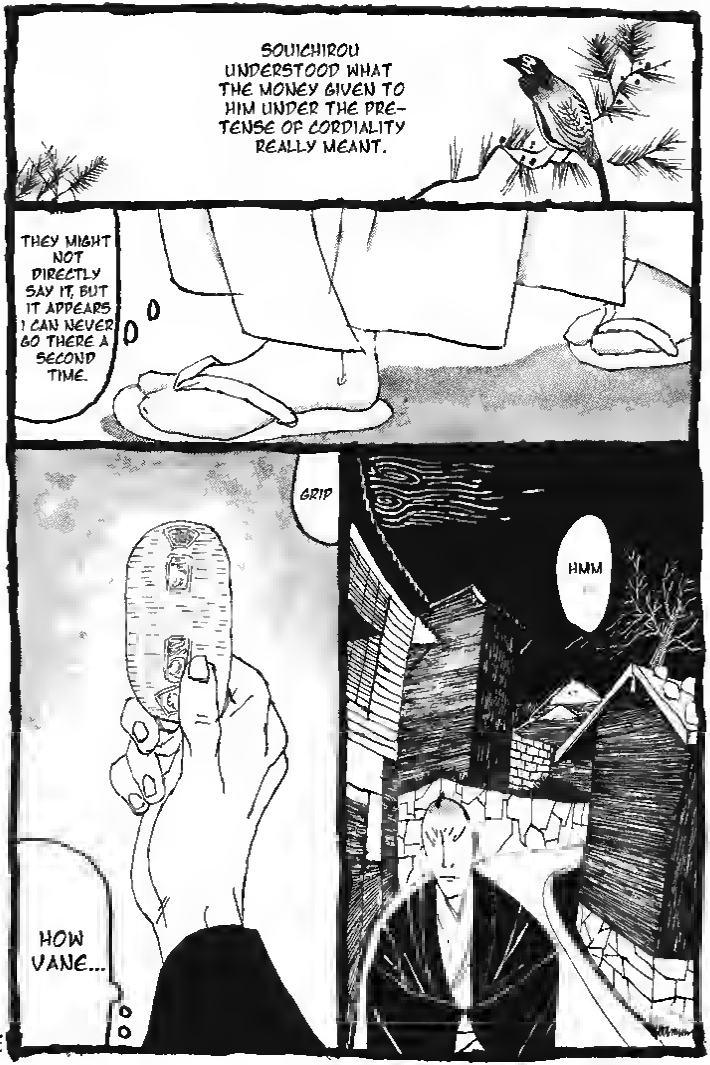
AH, WHAT A NICE FREEZE THIS IS.
HMPH
MITSU-HEITA!
THE SMELL OF A FRESH BUD
SNIFF SNIFF

MMM, DELICIOUS, DELICIOUS
I'VE NEVER HAD SUCH DELICIOUS SWEET BEAN JELLY
I WONDER MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE IT'S MADE IN THE VICINITY OF THE CAPITAL?
CHEW CHEW
OMAKI, SERVE SOUICHIROU SOME MORE SWEETS
YES
GLARE
BECAUSE I HAVE NO SON,
I WAS PLANNING TO WED HIM TO MY DAUGHTER AND HAVE HIM SUCCEED THIS DOJO

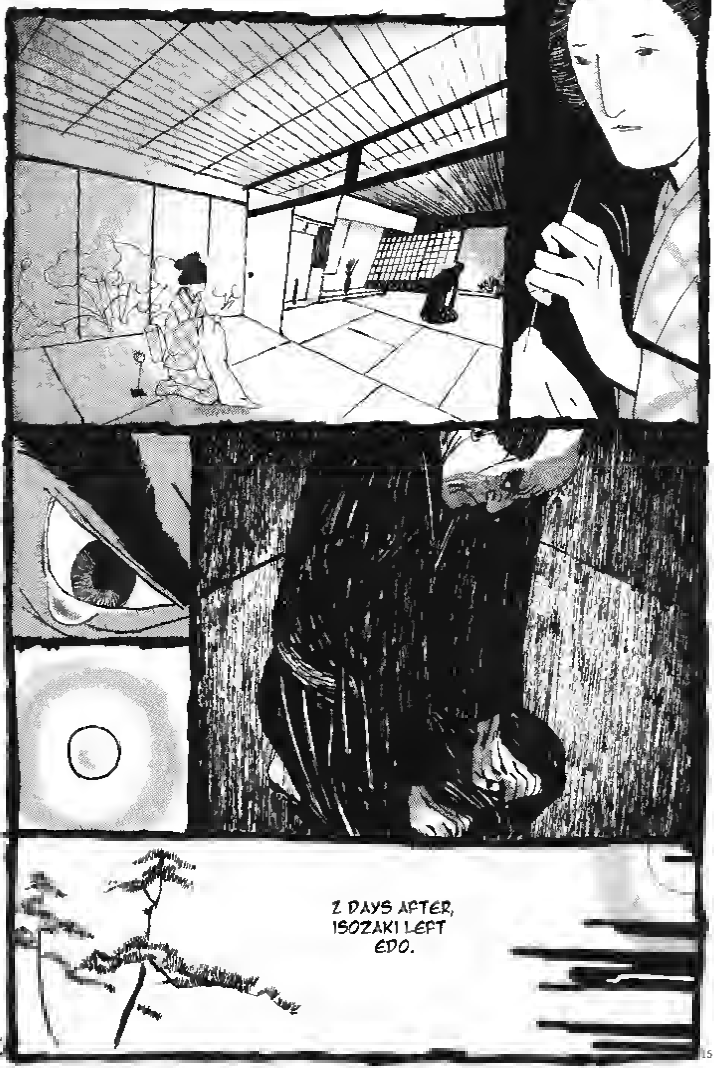

.....
I'M SURE HE'LL BE A FINE SUCCESSOR
THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR
I LEARNT ALL I KNOW OF THE SWORD FROM MY FATHER
I'VE NEVER REALLY TRAINED UNDER A PARTICULAR SCHOOL
MAYBE A FAMOUS ONE, PERHAPS?
MR SENOU, WHICH SCHOOL MIGHT YOU BE FROM?
.....
IF NOT, WHY DID YOU CHALLENGE OUR DOJO?
?
HMM
THEN, DO YOU HAVE ANY INTEREST IN STUDYING UNDER ONE?
HIS STRENGTH WAS VERY BEAUTIFUL.
AH, THAT WAS BECAUSE ISOZAKI WAS QUITE STRONG

I HAVE AN AFFLICTION IF YOU WILL, THAT OBSESSES ME INTO FIGHTING WORTHY OPPONENTS. MY MOTHER ALWAYS HATED THIS SIDE OF ME AND WANTED TO EVEN EXORCISE IT OUT OF ME
BUT I AM FASCINATED BY THE BEAUTY FOUND IN THOSE STRONG.
WHICH IS WHY I WANT TO CHALLENGE AGAIN AND AGAIN
I RE-FUSE
I CANNOT ACCEPT THIS.
REFUSE HIM!

CLACK
MR.SENOU, HERE IS SOMETHING FOR ALL THE TROUBLE TODAY.
IT MAY NOT BE MUCH, BUT PLEASE ACCEPT IT.
BUT I REALLY HAVEN'T DONE ANY-THING...
PLEASE DON'T BE SO CRUEL.
CLACK


SOUICHIROU UNDERSTOOD WHAT THE MONEY GIVEN TO HIM UNDER THE PRETENSE OF CORDIALITY REALLY MEANT.
THEY MIGHT NOT DIRECTLY SAY IT, BUT IT APPEARS I CAN NEVER GO THERE A SECOND TIME.
GRIP
HOW VANE...
HMM

EVEN THOUGH ALL HE DID WAS SAVE THAT GIRL IN THE TEAHOUSE.
HOW PITI-FUL THAT HEITA IS.
HOHOHO
HO HO HO

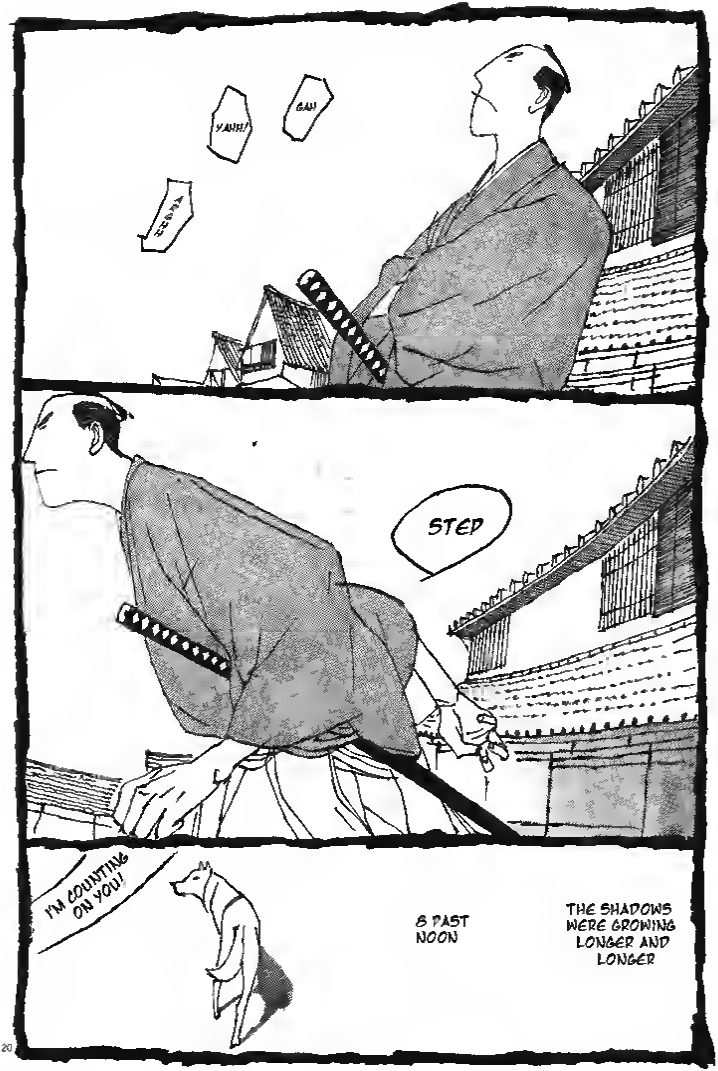

2 DAYS AFTER,
ISOZAKI LEFT
EDO.

BUT HE FOUND A FISHING VILLAGE TO LIVE AT, WHERE HE WORKED AS A FISHERMAN FOR A LIVING.
ISOZAKI HAD LEFT EDO UNDER THE PRETENSE OF TRAINING,
EPILOGUE
THERE, HE FELL IN LOVE WITH THE 3RD DAUGHTER OF THE TSUNAMOTO FAMILY
THEY MARRIED SHORTLY THEREAFTER.
THEY RAISED 4 SONS TOGETHER, AND ISOZAKI HAD BECOME A STRONG FISHERMEN THAT THE VILLAGERS ALL RELIED UPON

AND HE NEVER SPOKE ONCE OF HIS DAYS IN EDO.
IT IS SAID THAT HE LIKED BEING ALONE IN HIS LATER YEARS.

ON THIS DAY, SENOU SOUICHIROU WAS WANDERING THE MAIN STREET MORE AIMLESSLY THAN USUAL.
RETURNING BACK TO THE MAIN STORY.
!!
THUD
SNACK
MARTIAL ARTS TRAINING DOJO

THUD
ORAA!
HIT
HYAA!
南
AGHH!
SLAP
CRACK


YAHH!
GAH
STEP
I'M COUNTING ON YOU!
8 PAST NOON
THE SHADOWS WERE GROWING LONGER AND LONGER

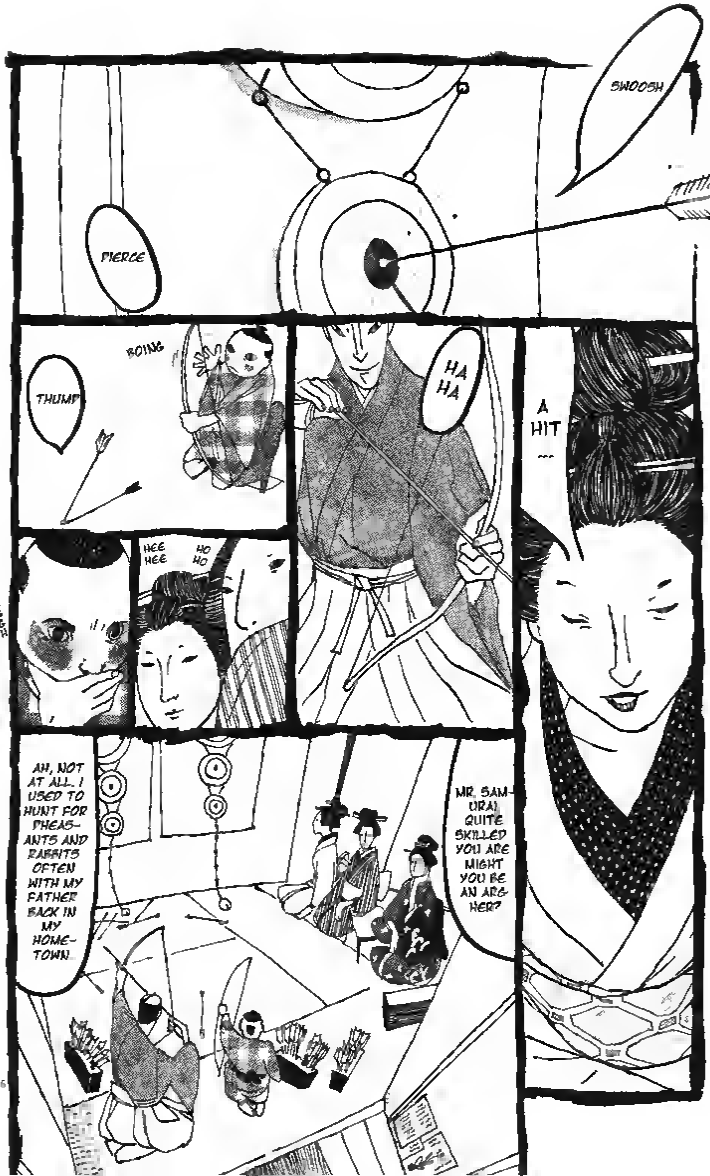
CHAPTER 6 ARCHERY RANGE

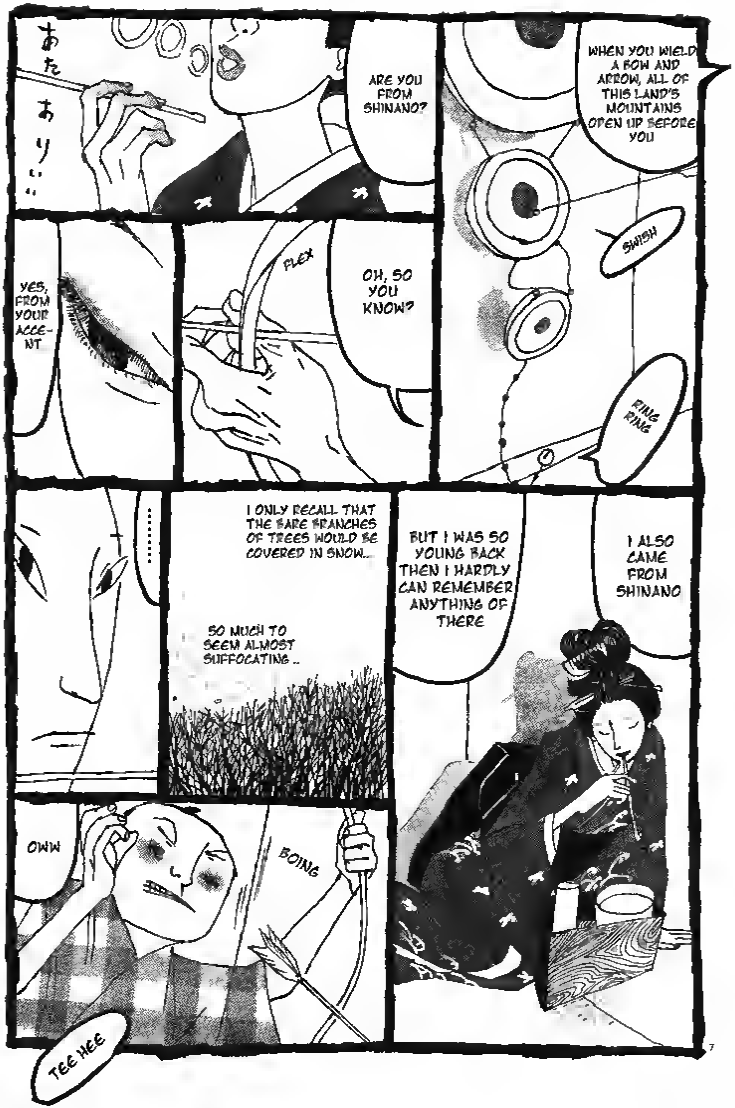
27TH OF JUNE,
7 AFTER NOON
WOOF
SLURP
GIVE ME SOME MORE, SOU.
BUT WON'T YOU BE HAVING DINNER SOON?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT.
FINE, I'LL GIVE YOU MY LEFT-OVERS THEN
YAYY!
SLURP
HEY, KAN.
WHAT'S THAT?

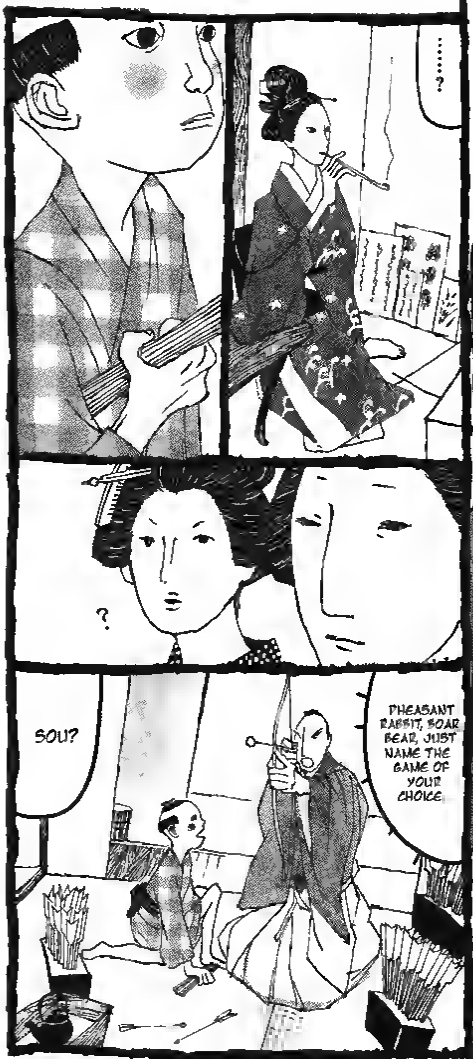
THAT STORE OVER THERE
THAT'S AN ARCHERY RANGE.
BUT I DON'T ACTUALLY KNOW MUCH ABOUT IT...
HMMM
AN ARCHERY RANGE...?
IT'S A BIT SUSPICIOUS THOUGH
MOTHER TOLD ME NOT TO GO NEAR IT.
SLURP
THE ARCHERY RANGE IN EDO TIMES WAS A PLACE WHERE THE COMMON FOLK COULD HAVE FUN WITH A BOW AND ARROW. IT IS A LITTLE DIFFERENT FROM THE ARCHERY RANGES OF TODAY, IN PRIMARILY OF THE PRESENCE OF LADIES WHO WORKED THERE, CALLED "ARROW RETRIEVAL GIRLS"

WELCOME...
SLIDE
WHAT'S THIS? YOU BROUGHT A KID ALONG?
FU FU FU
.....
WE CAME TO SHOOT SOME ARROWS.
YUR
MMM.

HOW MANY DO YOU WANT?
OH IT'S FINE. AS LONG AS THEY'RE HEAT TO SHOOT, CUSTOMERS ARE CUS-TOMERS
THIS IS NO PLACE FOR KIDS
AH!
GIVE US ALL THE ARROWS THIS MUCH IS WORTH

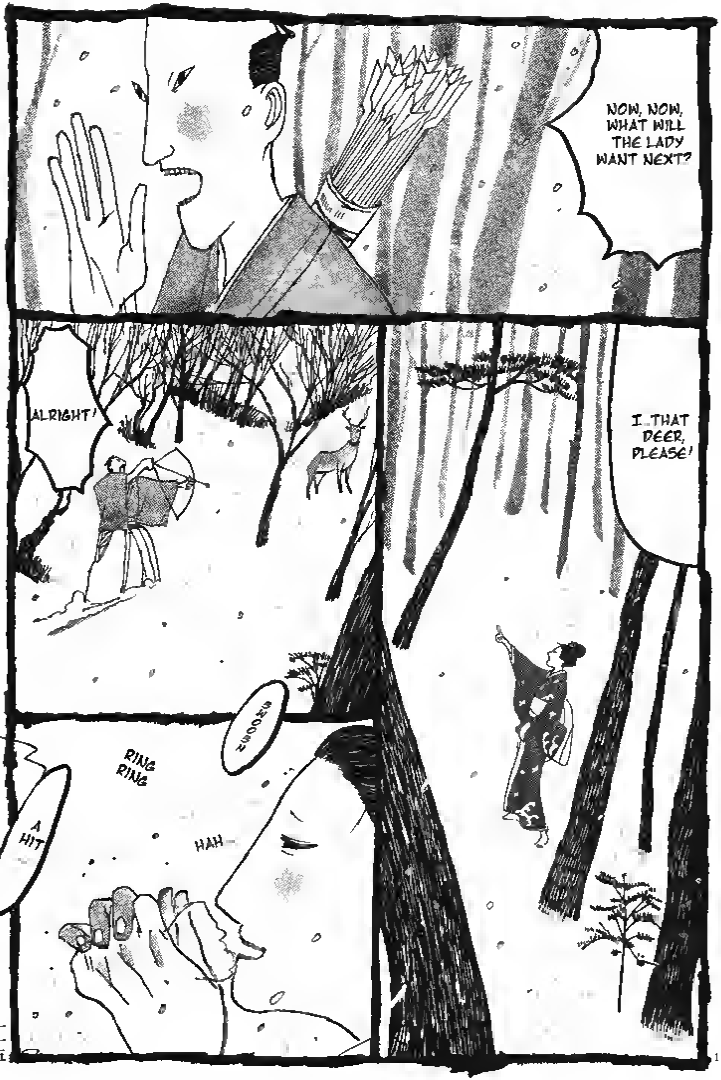

SWOOSH
PIERCE
BOING
THUMP
HA HA
A HIT ...
HEE HEE
HO HO
MR. SAMURAI, QUITE SKILLED YOU ARE. MIGHT YOU BE AN ARCHER?
AH, NOT AT ALL. I USED TO HUNT FOR PHEASANTS AND RABBITS OFTEN WITH MY FATHER BACK IN MY HOMETOWN.


あたり…
ARE YOU FROM SHINANO?
WHEN YOU WIELD A BOW AND ARROW, ALL OF THIS LAND'S MOUNTAINS OPEN UP BEFORE YOU
SWISH
FLEX
OH, SO YOU KNOW?
YES, FROM YOUR ACCENT
RING RING
I ONLY RECALL THAT THE BARE BRANCHES OF TREES WOULD BE COVERED IN SNOW...
SO MUCH TO SEEM ALMOST SUFFOCATING ..
BUT I WAS SO YOUNG BACK THEN I HARDLY CAN REMEMBER ANYTHING OF THERE
I ALSO CAME FROM SHINANO
OWW
BOING
TEE HEE


.....?
?
SOU?
PHEASANT RABBIT, BOAR BEAR, JUST NAME THE GAME OF YOUR CHOICE.
WELL WELL. THEN LET ME GIVE YOU AN OFFERING OF YOUR CHOICE. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO HUNT FOR YOU?

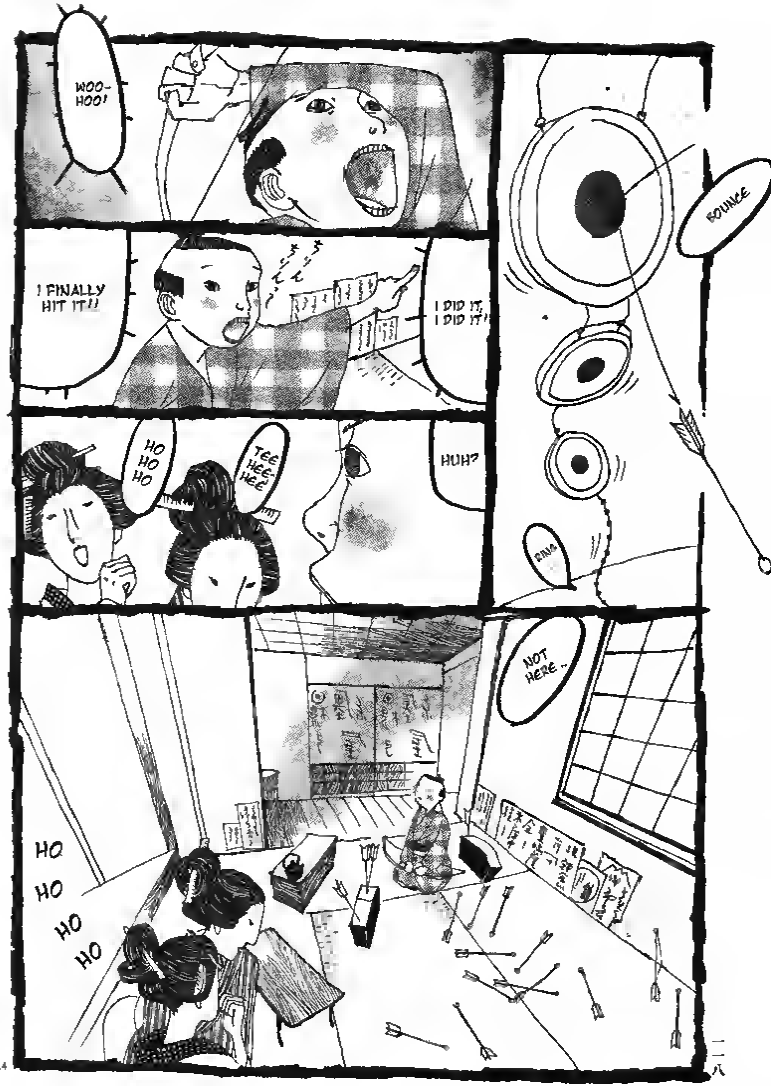
AH, THAT BOAR OVER THERE LOOKS GOOD!
STOP IT, SOUUU
HO HO HO
PLEASE WATCH!

HAHA
HOW WAS THAT?
IT WENT RIGHT THROUGH ITS HEART!
RWAGH...!


NOW, NOW, WHAT WILL THE LADY WANT NEXT?
I...THAT DEER, PLEASE!
ALRIGHT!
GASP
RING RING
HAH
A HIT

HAHAHA
HOHOH
6

HA HA HA HA
HO HO HO
A HIT...
RING RING
HA HA


WOO-HOO!
I FINALLY HIT IT!!
I DID IT, I DID IT!
BOUNCE
HUH?
HO HO HO
TEE HEE-HEE
BINK
NOT HERE...
HO
HO
HO
HO

SOUUU...
AFTER THAT NIGHT, SOUICHIROU DIDN'T RETURN BACK TO THE KATAGI TENEMENTS FOR A FEW DAYS..

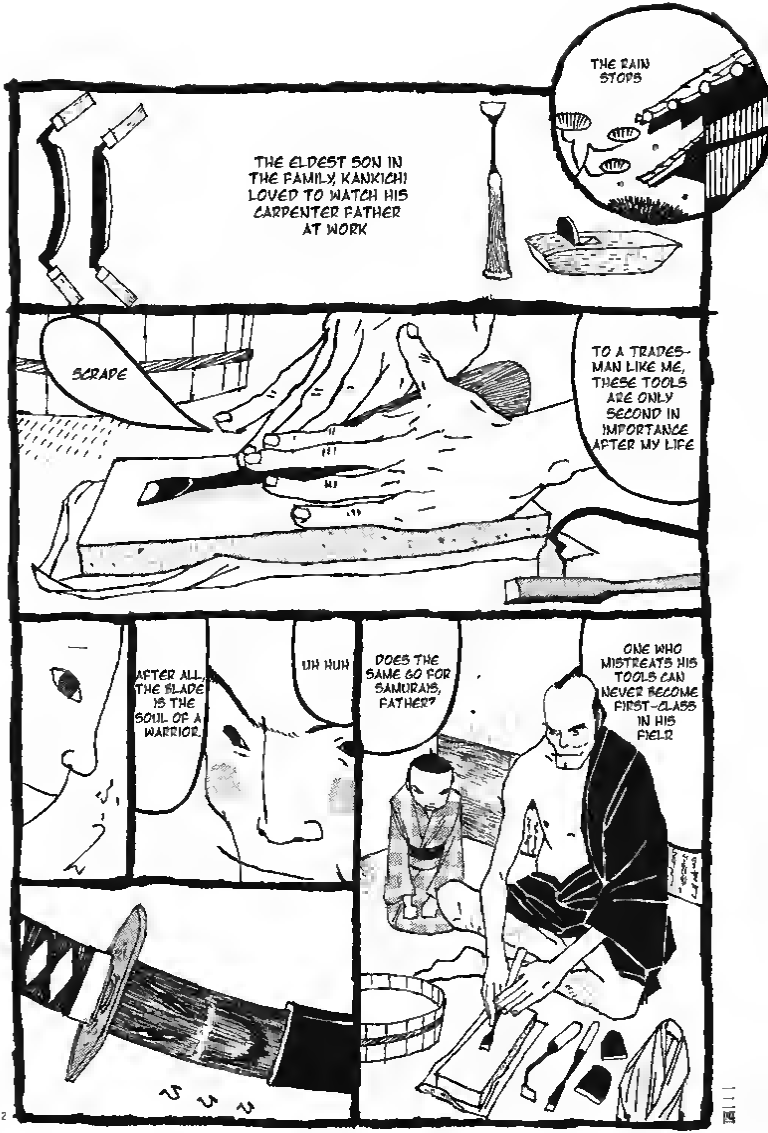
KANKICHI'S FATHER, THE CARPENTER TOMEKICHI...
MAYBE HE GOT HIMSELF A LOVER? HEE HEE HEE..
IS WHAT HE SAID
MEANWHILE, THE WRINKLES ON THE LANDLORD YOZAEMON GREW DEEPER BY THE DAY...
THAT GUY...
楊弓場
CHE
IT'S SEEN 5 DAYS SINCE THAT SAMURAI
I HEARD HE RESERVED THAT ARCHERY PLACE.
HA HA
HE BETTER HOPE THAT HE DOESN'T END UP BROKE.

THE 4TH DAY SINCE THEN
!
STEP

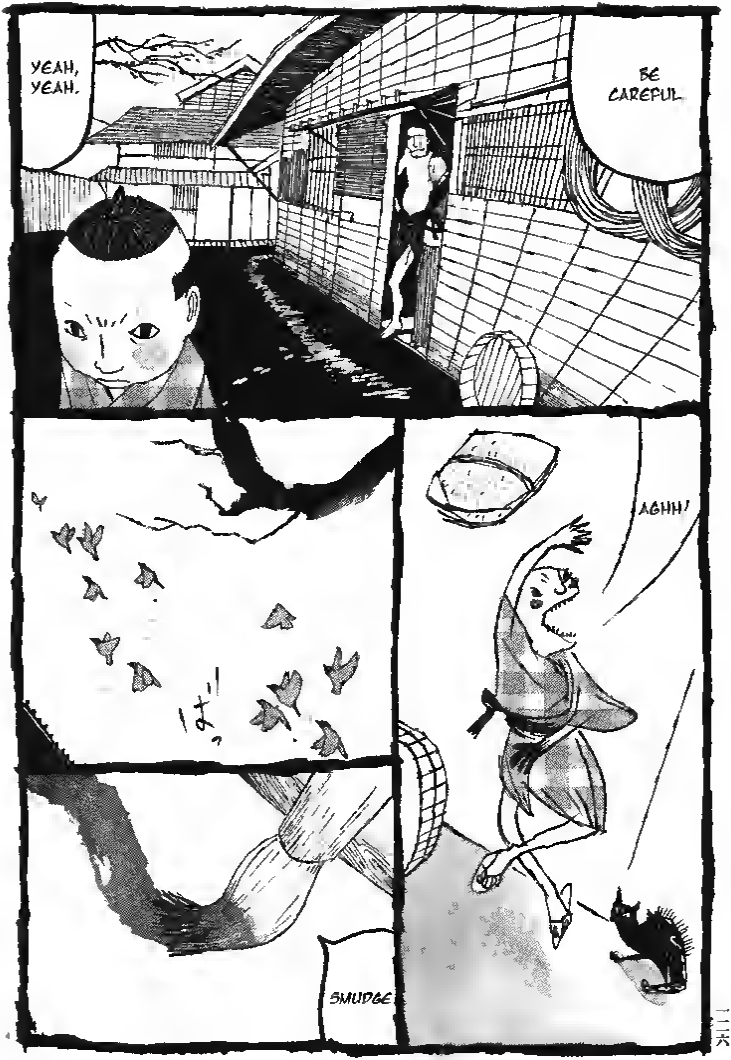
I THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER COME BACK
AHH, IF IT ISN'T KAN. I GET THE FEELING IT'S BEEN AWHILE SINCE YOU LAST SAW ME, HAHA
HAHA, IT SEEMS I WAS DRIVEN OUT BECAUSE I STAYED TOO LONG.
HAHA, YOU'RE SUCH AN IDIOT.
MEOW
HMM?
AH, THAT'S RIGHT.
THE STRAY CAT IN THE BACK ALLEY GAVE BIRTH TO KITTENS.
MEOW
MEOW
MEOW
BEGINNING OF JULY THE CAT CRIES OUT AT 5 IN THE MORNING...
HAHA

TRANSLATED BY HOX

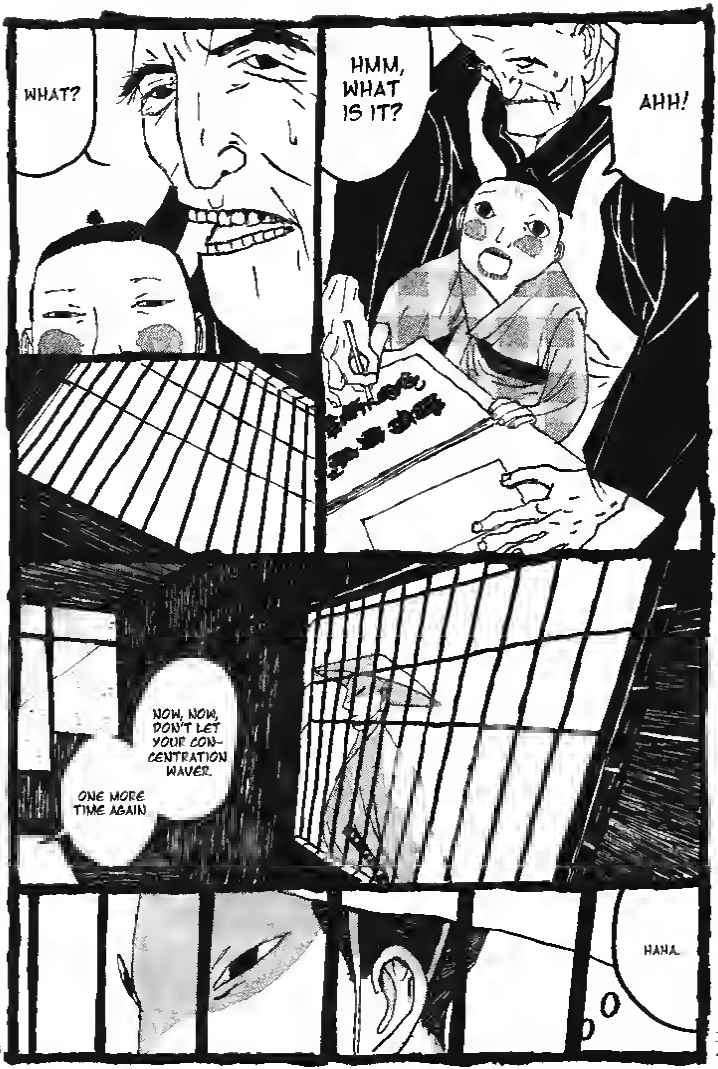
竹光侍
CHAPTER 7
THE WIND THAT BLOWS
BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH


THE RAIN STOPS
THE ELDEST SON IN THE FAMILY, KANKICHI LOVED TO WATCH HIS CARPENTER FATHER AT WORK
SCRAPE
TO A TRADESMAN LIKE ME, THESE TOOLS ARE ONLY SECOND IN IMPORTANCE AFTER MY LIFE
AFTER ALL, THE BLADE IS THE SOUL OF A WARRIOR.
UH HUH
DOES THE SAME GO FOR SAMURAIS, FATHER?
ONE WHO MISTREATS HIS TOOLS CAN NEVER BECOME FIRST-CLASS IN HIS FIELD

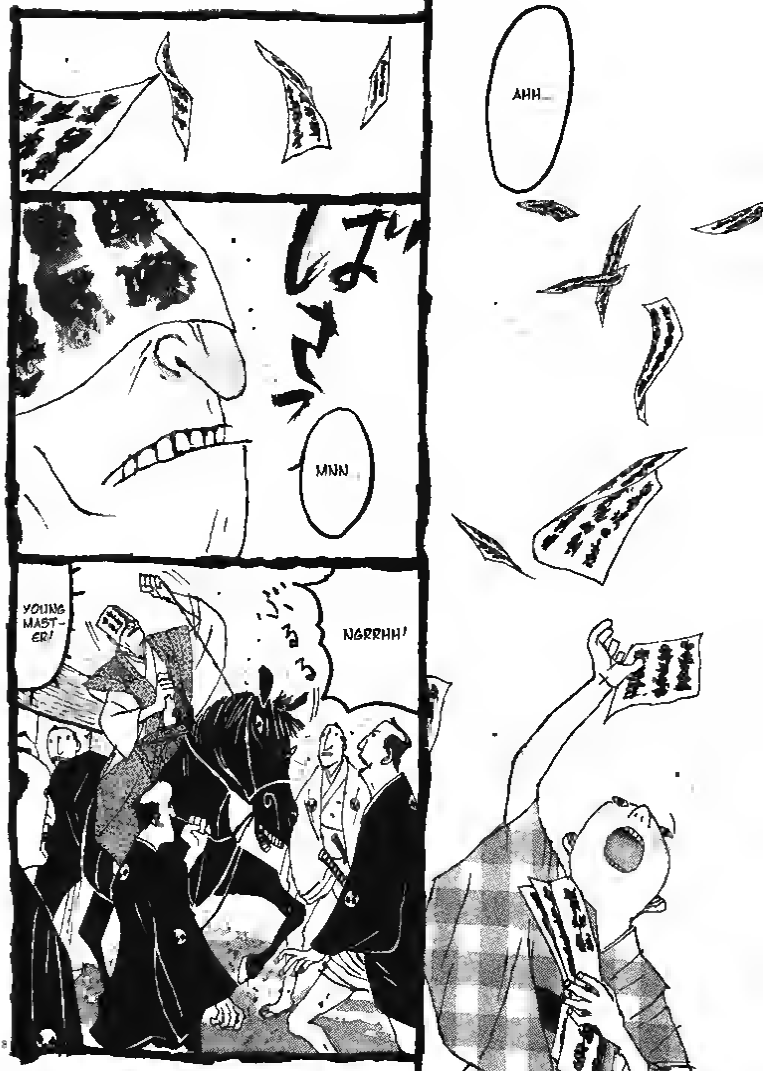
KAN, IT'S TIME TO GO TO YOUR TUTOR'S.
BUT MOTHER, THE RAIN JUST STOPPED.
I'LL BE COVERED WITH MUD IF I GO NOW.
DON'T BE PICKY NOW. GET GOING, KAN.
?
YOU SAID YOU WANTED A LITTLE BROTHER, RIGHT?
STOP SAYING UNNECCESSARY THINGS.
NOW GO. HERE'S YOUR INK-STONE.
AWW


YEAH, YEAH.
BE CAREFUL.
AGHH!
SMUDGE

HOW ABOUT COMING TO MY TEMPLE?
KANKICHI, YOU'RE QUICK TO UNDERSTAND THINGS, AREN'T YOU?
HE HAS AN INCLINATION TO THE STUDIES AND ARTS
I FEEL THAT THIS CHILD COULD BECOME A MASTER CALLIGRAPHER ONE DAY
IF YOU DO THAT, OUR FAMILY WILL BE RUINED
PLEASE DON'T TAKE HIM JUST TO HAVE HIM BECOME A BOY-PRIEST.
!?
HMM
HEE HEE HEE
HE ONLY NEEDS TO SUCCEED HIS FATHER AS A CARPENTER.


WHAT?
HMM, WHAT IS IT?
AHH!
NOW, NOW, DON'T LET YOUR CONCENTRATION WAVER.
ONE MORE TIME AGAIN
HAHA.

SOUUU!!!
STEP
HE ALWAYS JUST DISA-PPEARS...
UNIT RETURN TO JAPANESE


AHH...
MNN
YOUNG MAST-ER!
NGRRHH!

YOUNG MASTER!
YOUNG MASTER!
YOUNG MASTER!
YOUNG MASTER!
HEY, YOU LITTLE BRAT OVER THERE! JUST WHAT ARE YOU DOING THROWING THESE DIRTY PIECES OF PAPER!?
ARREST THAT BOY!!

ARREST HIM IMMEDI-ATELY!!
TAKE HIS LIFE AWAY FOR DIS-RESPECT-ING MY HONOUR!!

SILENCE!!! HOW DARE A MERE BRAT UNHORSE THE GREAT MATSUDAIRA MASAYUKI!!!
YOUNG MASTER, THIS IS THE RESIDENTIAL AREA
PLEASE SHOW MERCY TO THE YOUNG ONE!
!
SILENCE, WHO GAVE THEE PERMISSION TO SPEAK!
YOU ARE NOW THE YOUNG MASTER OF THE KOFA YAGAWA FAMILY
SIR YOU MUST NOT SPEAK OF THE MASTU-DAIRA NAME ANYMORE

THE ONE WHO THREW THE DIRTY PAPER AND THUS DISRESPECTED YOUR COUNTENANCE WAS I, SIR!
I SHALL PREPARE THE NECESSARY MEN TO ASSIST WITH THE PROPER SEPPUKU RITUAL!!
IF YOU ACCEPT IT, THEN COMMIT SEPPUKU!
I MUST BE PUNISHED FOR MY ACTIONS!

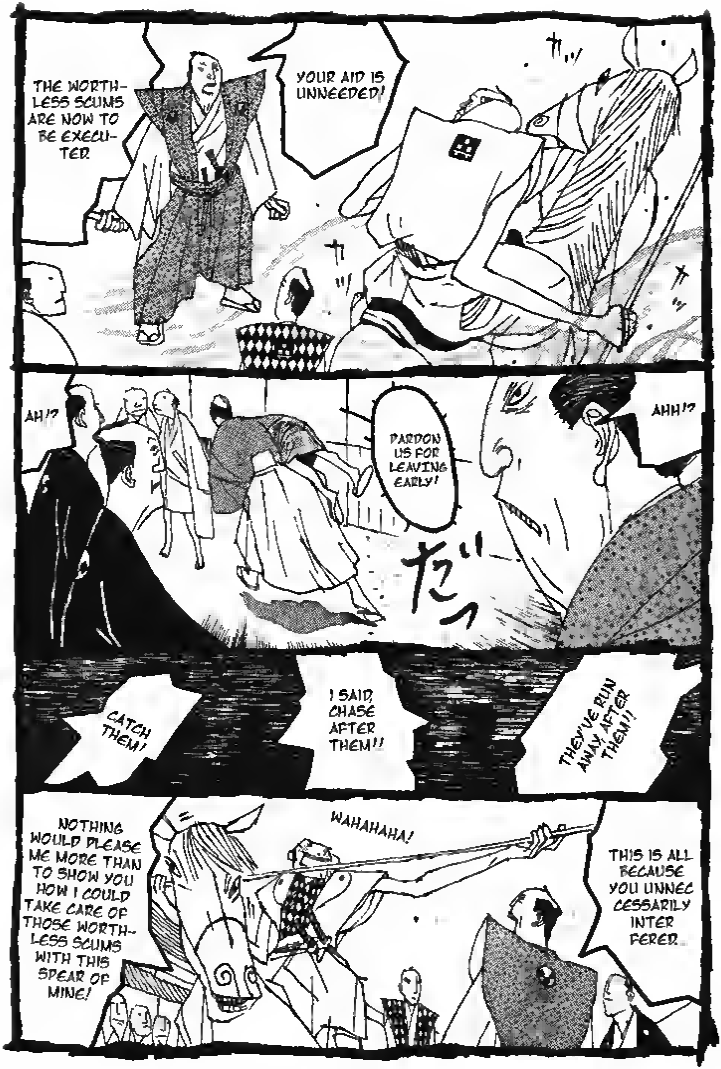
AH...
SO NOISY
WHAT A DREADFUL MAN IN SUCH PEACEFUL TIMES.
HAHA
THAT MAN OVER THERE IS SIR KOBAYA-GAWA, MASTER DAIZABUROU.
THAT KID SURE RAN INTO A TROUBLE-SOME MAN
THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN MANY RUMORS OF HIS FOND-NESS FOR RAMPAGING ABOUT.
THOUGH I HAVE HEARD THAT HE IS QUITE SKILLED WITH THE SWORD AND LIKE,

EVEN HIS ATTENDANTS LOOK PITIFULLY TIRED OF HIS UNRULY BEHAVIOUR
NO!
GENJI, THE ONE WHOM I WAS REFERRING TO AS DREADFUL IS THAT RONIN!
LOOK AT HIS CONDUCT!
IT'S QUITE CONSIDERABLE!
HE'S HIDING A BLADE UNDERNEATH THAT HAT OF HIS
HE'S AN ASSASSIN

WHO SAID YOU COULD RAISE YOUR HEAD!! YOU FILTHY SCUM OF A RONIN!!
HMPH
ALRIGHT, SCRAM
!
THE YOUNG MASTER WILL TAKE PITY ON YOU THIS TIME.

DON'T MAKE A FUSS
IT'S NOTHING
YOUNG MAS
KINOSHITA!
AHH
AGH
HAVE YOU ALL GONE MAD OR ARE YOU INTENTIONALLY DEFYING ME!?
I WILL TAKE THE BRAT.
HEED THAT CUT AS A WARNING

SIR KOBAYAGAWA!!
AND HOW ARE YOU ON THIS DAY?
SHALL I, MIKOSHI DAIZABUROU, ASSIST YOU IN ANYTHING!?
MIKOSHI
WHAT IS WITH HIS ATTIRE?

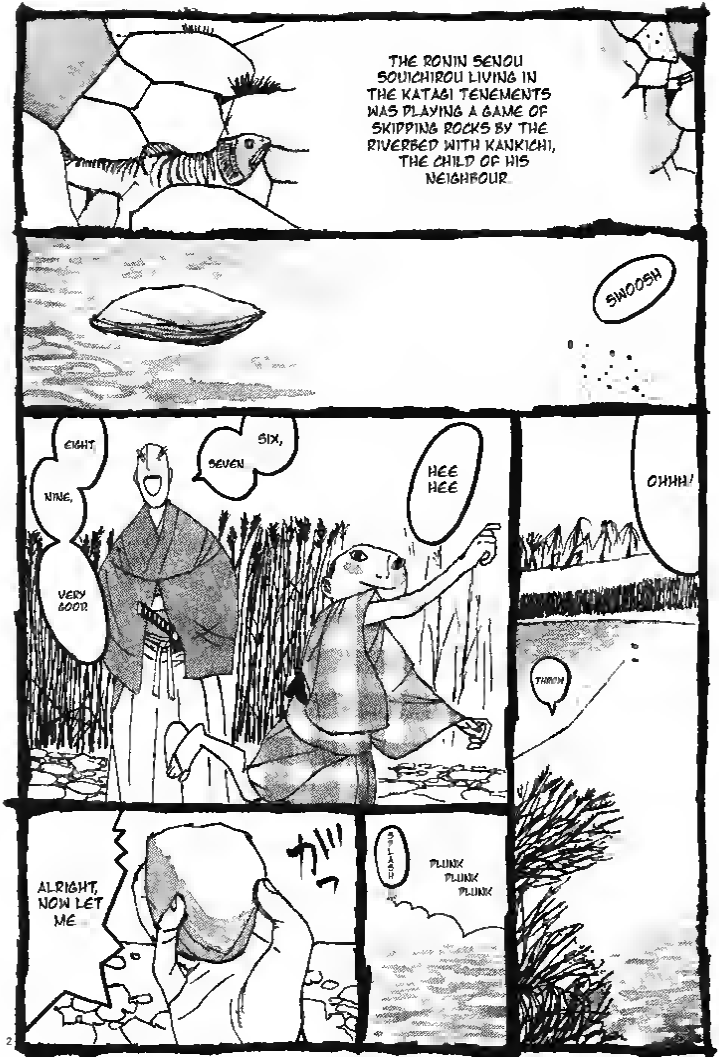

THE WORTHLESS SCUMS ARE NOW TO BE EXECUTED
YOUR AID IS UNNEEDED!
AH!?
PARDON US FOR LEAVING EARLY!
だっ
AHH!?
CATCH THEM!
I SAID CHASE AFTER THEM!!
THEY'VE RUN AWAY AFTER THEM!!
NOTHING WOULD PLEASE ME MORE THAN TO SHOW YOU HOW I COULD TAKE CARE OF THOSE WORTHLESS SCUMS WITH THIS SPEAR OF MINE!
WAHAHAHA!
THIS IS ALL BECAUSE YOU UNNECESSARILY INTERFERED

IT IS CRAFTED WITH UNMATCHED HIGH QUALITY GOLD,
6 FEET LONG, WITH A DEADLY SHARP TIP!
BE GONE, MIKOSHI!
I DO NOT CARE FOR YOUR ABILITES!
HAH,
HAH,
HAH,
GA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
JUST BE GONE AT ONCE!!

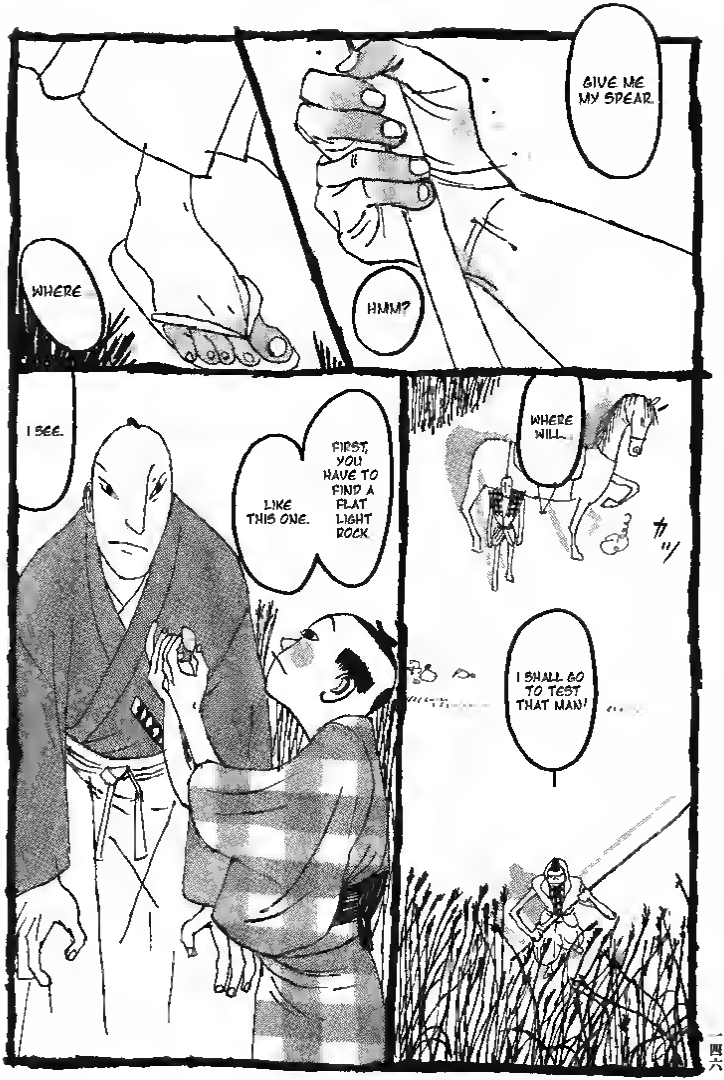
I THOUGHT THAT THIS LIFE OF MINE HAD REACHED ITS END FOR SURE. HAHAHA!
SAME HERE!
I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO BE KILLED!
HAHAHA!!
WHAT QUICK FEET THOSE WHO FLING THEIR MUD AROUND HAVE!

TRANSLATED BY HOX

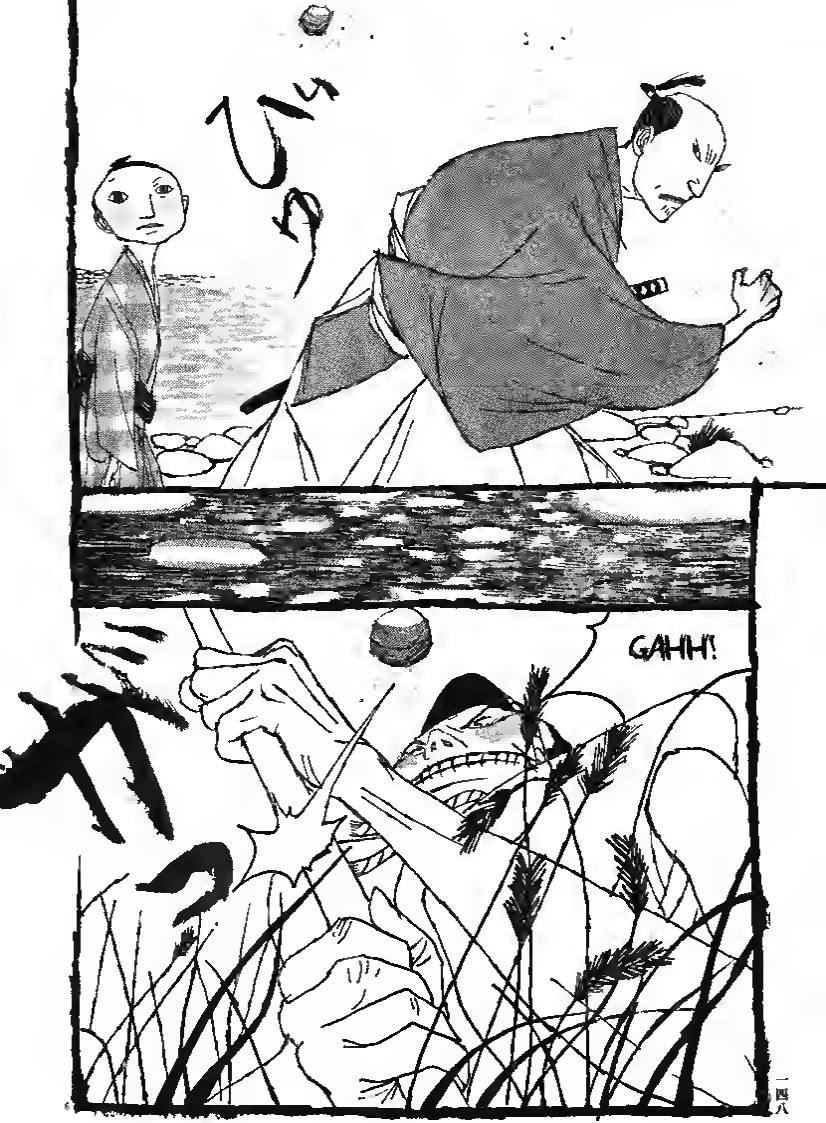
CHAPTER 8
A SAMURAI REMINISCES
AMIDST THE CICADAS' CRIES


THE RONIN SENOU SOUICHIROU LIVING IN THE KATABI TENEMENTS WAS PLAYING A GAME OF SKIPPING ROCKS BY THE RIVERBED WITH KANKICHI, THE CHILD OF HIS NEIGHBOUR.
SWOOSH
EIGHT,
NINE,
VERY GOOD
SIX,
SEVEN
HEE HEE
OHHH!
THROW
ALRIGHT, NOW LET ME...
カッ
SPLASH
PLINK PLINK PLINK

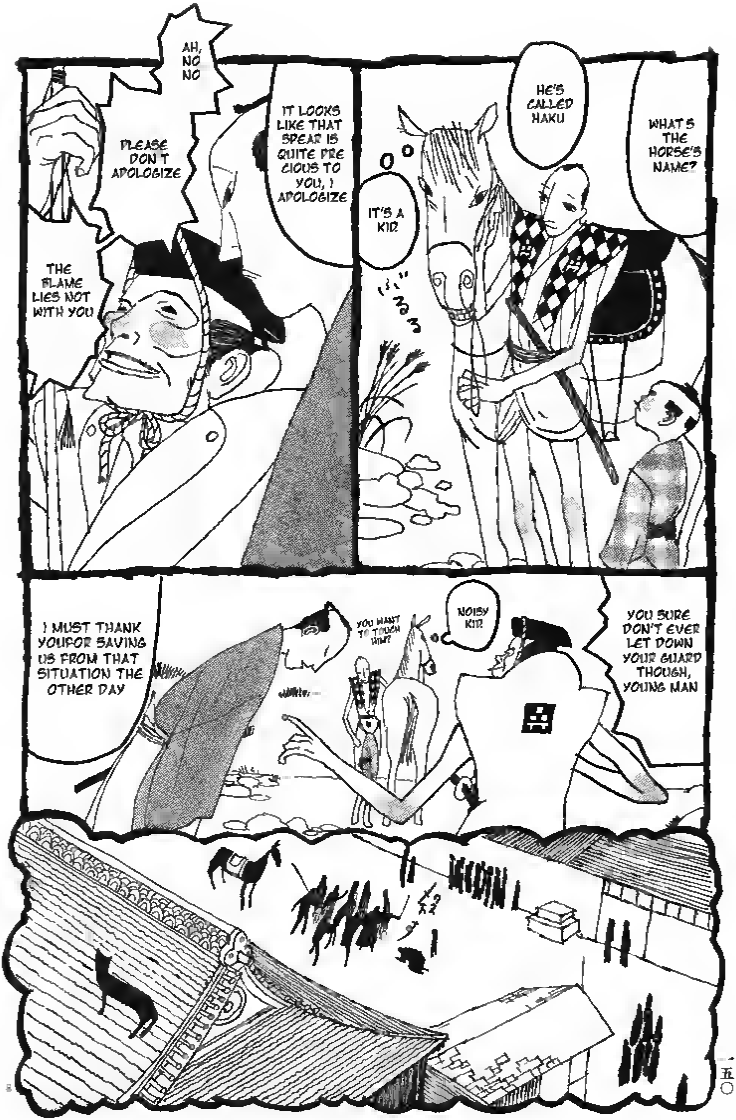
SPLASH
HIYAH!
UMM, IT WON'T WORK IF YOU THROW SUCH A BIG STONE...
MMM,
DARN IT
TOLD YA SO
DAIZAFUROU WAS THE 3RD SON OF THE MIKOSHI FAMILY WHO SERVED AS VASSALS TO THE SHOGUNATE. HOWEVER, DUE TO PROBLEMS WITH HIS HEALTH, HE WAS LEFT WITH AN EXCESS OF FREE TIME, SO HE DECIDED TO PATROL THE CITY WITH HIS SERVANT, GENJI
HOHO

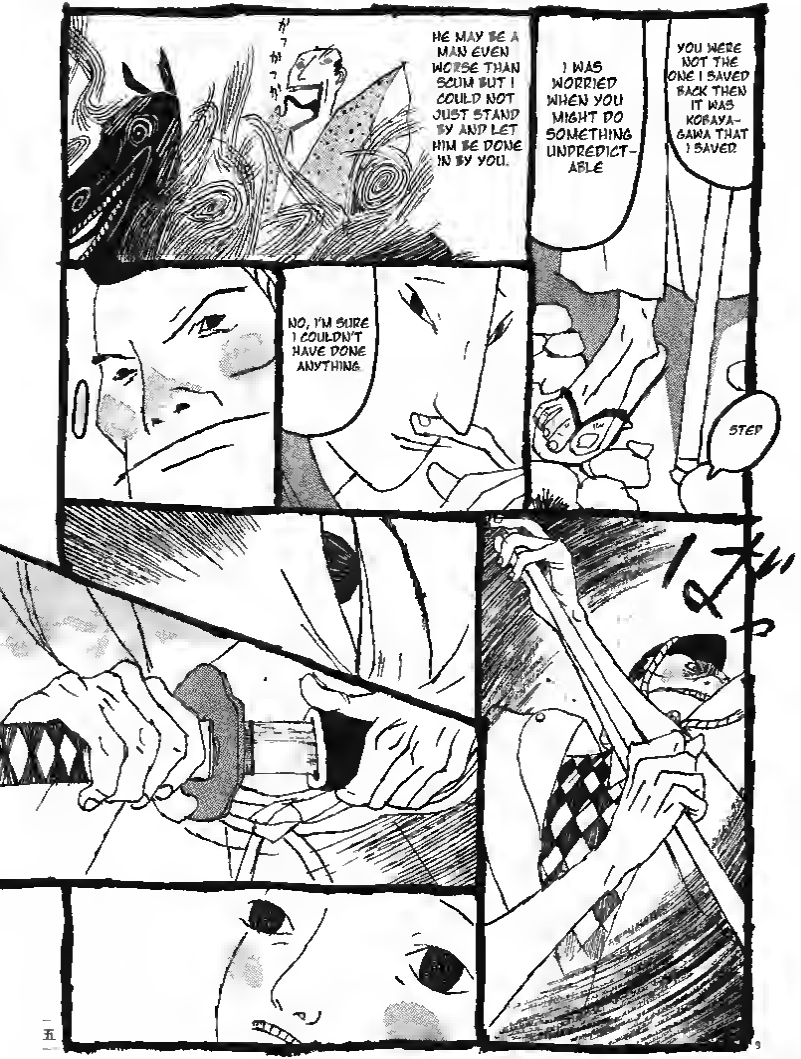

GIVE ME MY SPEAR.
HMM?
WHERE
WHERE WILL...
I SHALL GO TO TEST THAT MAN!
FIRST, YOU HAVE TO FIND A FLAT LIGHT ROCK.
LIKE THIS ONE.
I SEE.

RUSTLE
AND THEN YOU HAVE TO THROW IT PARALLEL TO THE SURFACE OF THE WATER.
LIKE THIS.
SOMETHING AS ROUND AS THAT WON'T DO
GRIP
RUSTLE
!?


GAHH!

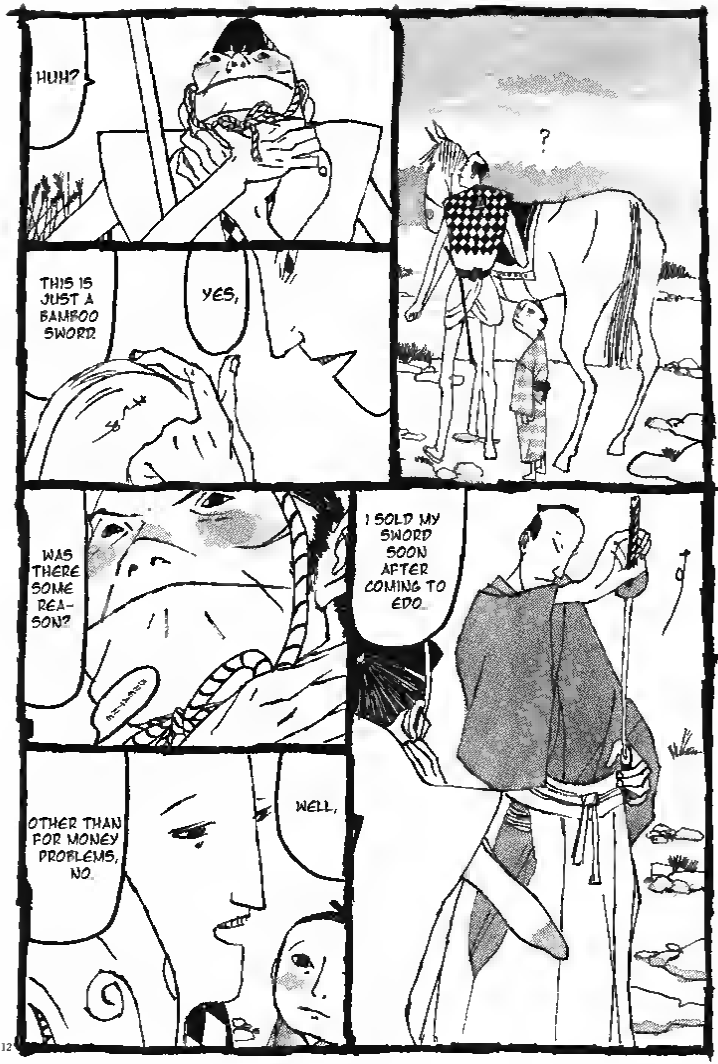
AH... THIS ISN'T GOOD ...
A STRANGE DRESS
OH WHAT A PITY, YOU MADE A MARK ON MY SPEAR
24°
2°
3°

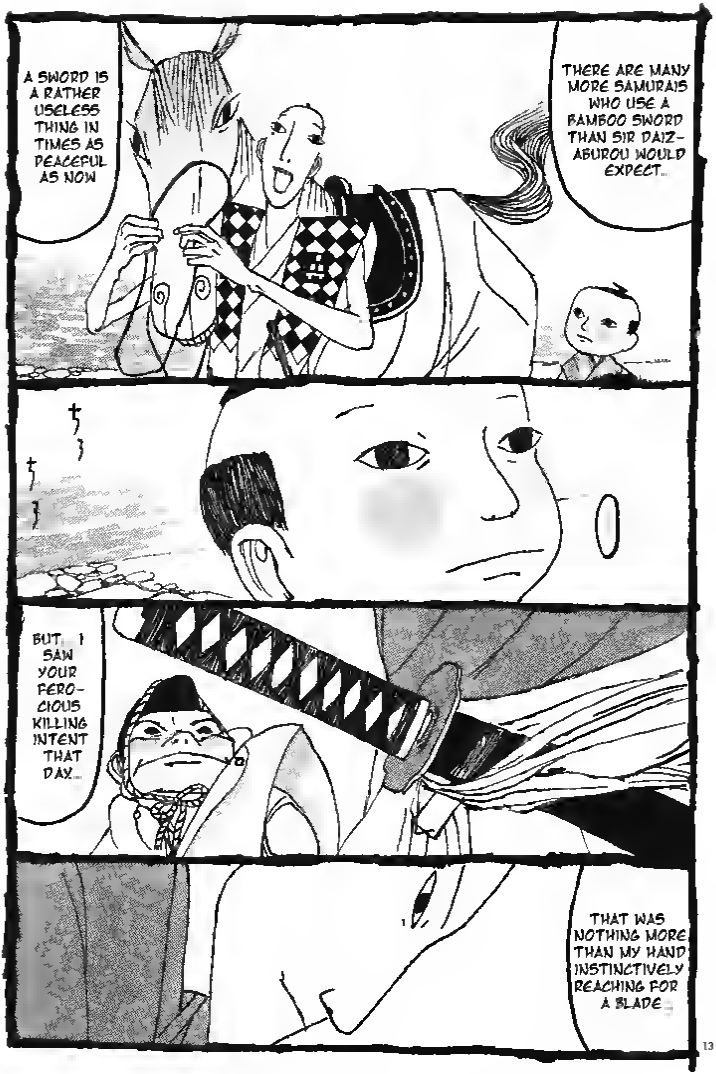

AH, NO NO
PLEASE DON'T APOLOGIZE
IT LOOKS LIKE THAT SPEAR IS QUITE PRECIOUS TO YOU, I APOLOGIZE
THE BLAME LIES NOT WITH YOU
WHAT'S THE HORSE'S NAME?
HE'S CALLED HAKU
IT'S A KID
I MUST THANK YOUFOR SAVING US FROM THAT SITUATION THE OTHER DAY
YOU MUST BE TOUGH HIM?
NOISY KID
YOU SURE DON'T EVER LET DOWN YOUR GUARD THOUGH, YOUNG MAN


YOU WERE NOT THE ONE I SAVED BACK THEN IT WAS KOBAYA-GAWA THAT I SAVED
I WAS WORRIED WHEN YOU MIGHT DO SOMETHING UNPREDICT-ABLE
STEP
NO, I'M SURE I COULDN'T HAVE DONE ANYTHING
HE MAY BE A MAN EVEN WORSE THAN SCUM BUT I COULD NOT JUST STAND BY AND LET HIM BE DONE IN BY YOU.

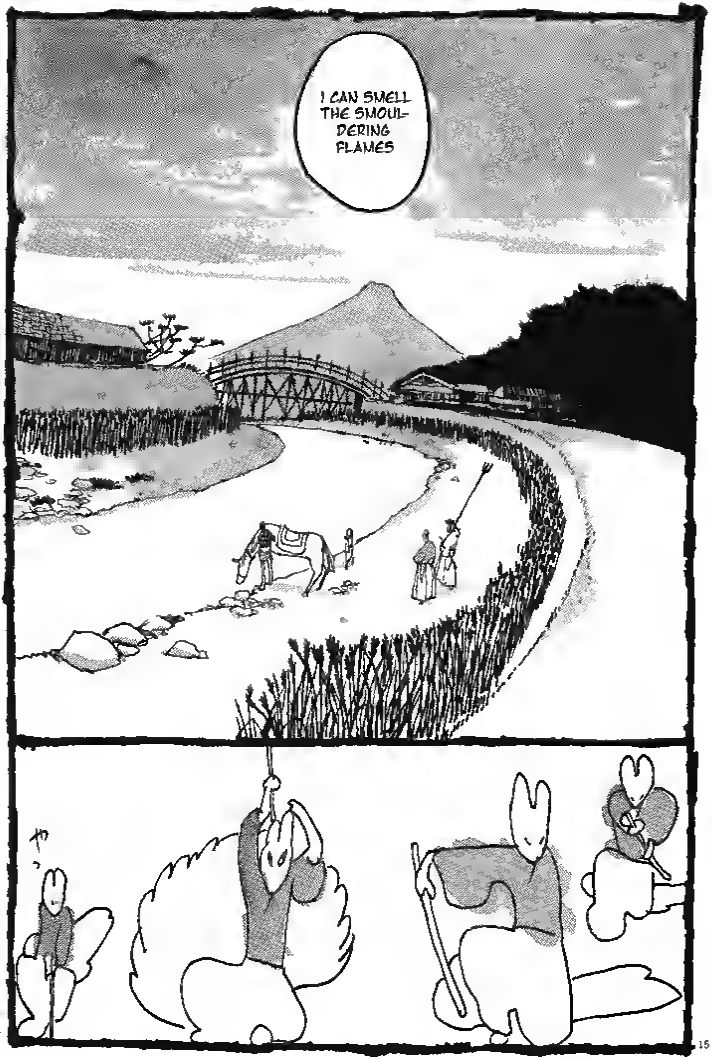
ぽん

SORRY BUT NO
LET ME RIDE ON HAKU TOO.
AHH!
GUH


HUH?
?
THIS IS JUST A BAMBOO SWORD.
YES,
WAS THERE SOME REASON?
I SOLD MY SWORD SOON AFTER COMING TO EDO.
OTHER THAN FOR MONEY PROBLEMS, NO.
WELL,


A SWORD IS A RATHER USELESS THING IN TIMES AS PEACEFUL AS NOW
THERE ARE MANY MORE SAMURAIS WHO USE A BAMBOO SWORD THAN SIR DAIZABUROU WOULD EXPECT...
BUT... I SAW YOUR FEROCIOUS KILLING INTENT THAT DAY...
THAT WAS NOTHING MORE THAN MY HAND INSTINCTIVELY REACHING FOR A BLADE...

AFTER ALL, I GREW UP TOGETHER WITH A SWORD.
AH, THERE ARE MANY CICADAS CRYING OUT EVEN HERE IN EDO.
HM?
YES
AH, WHAT A NICE BREEZE THIS IS


I CAN SMELL THE SMOULDERING FLAMES

HAHAHA, IT LOOKS AS IF THE BOY FELL ASLEEP
EVEN THOUGH HE WAS SO EXCITED TO RIDE HAKU,
HAHA!
HE MUST HAVE BEEN QUITE TIRED.
I'M SURE TODAY WAS AN UNFORGETTABLE DAY FOR KAN AS WELL.
THANK YOU SIR.
HMM,

LET ME SAY ONE THING TO YOU, SENOU.
BUT IT'S STRANGE TO SEE THAT YOU ONLY KEEP ONLY ONE ATTENDANT. I'M SURE A MAN OF YOUR STATUS SHOULD...
YES.
THE DEMON IN YOUR HEART WILL NOT DISAP-PEAR.
EVEN IF YOU CARRY ONLY BAMBOO NOW,

KANKICHI WAS IN HIS DREAM WORLD
RIDING ON THE BACK OF A DRAGON.
WOAH
HE HEARD THE SOUND THE WIND RUSHING PAST HIS EARS
THE DRAGON SOARED TO THE MOON, HIGHER AND HIGHER, AS IF DANCING
NO...
THAT'S WRONG
THE MOON WAS ACTU-ALLY JUST A DANGO THAT SOUICHIROU WAS EATING
WHAT?
IT WAS THAT SORT OF DREAM.

TRANSLATED BY HOX

CHAPTER 9

THE APPROACHING FALL

SOUICHIROU

TSUNEGOROU

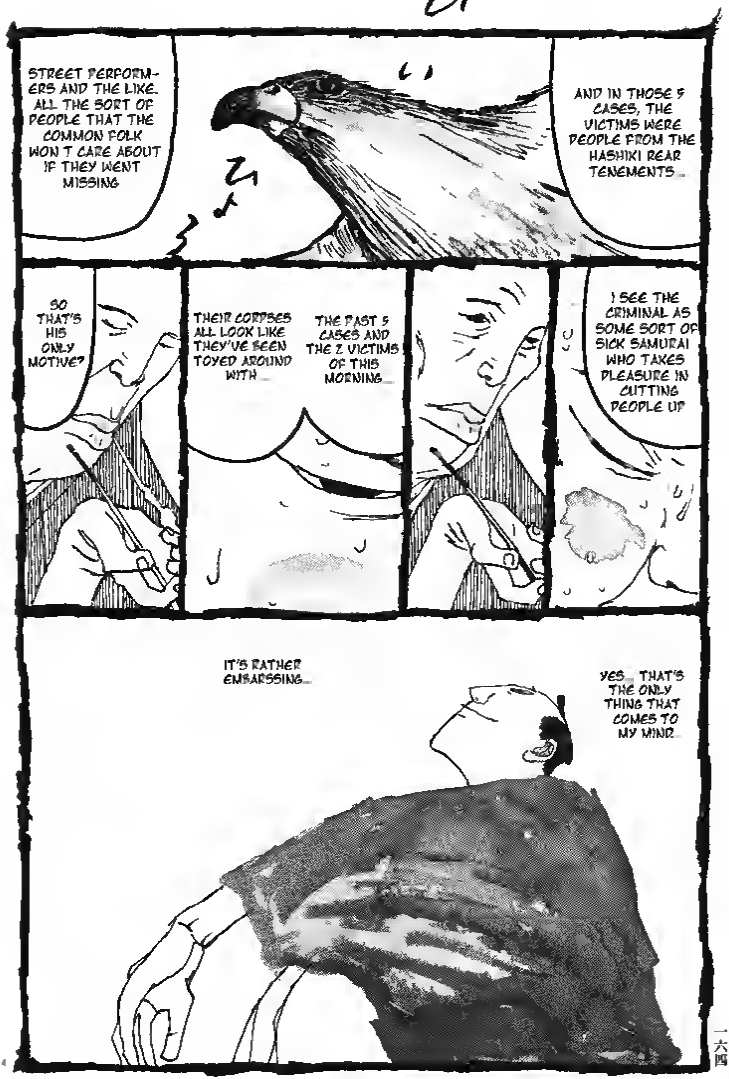
KANKICHI

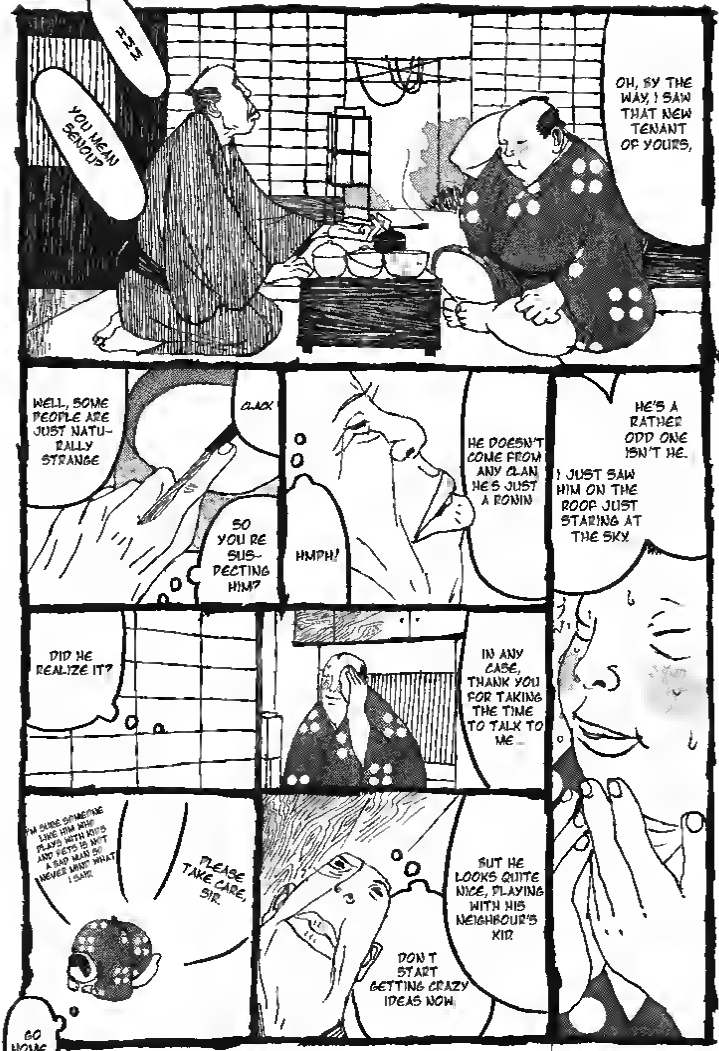
YOZAEMON

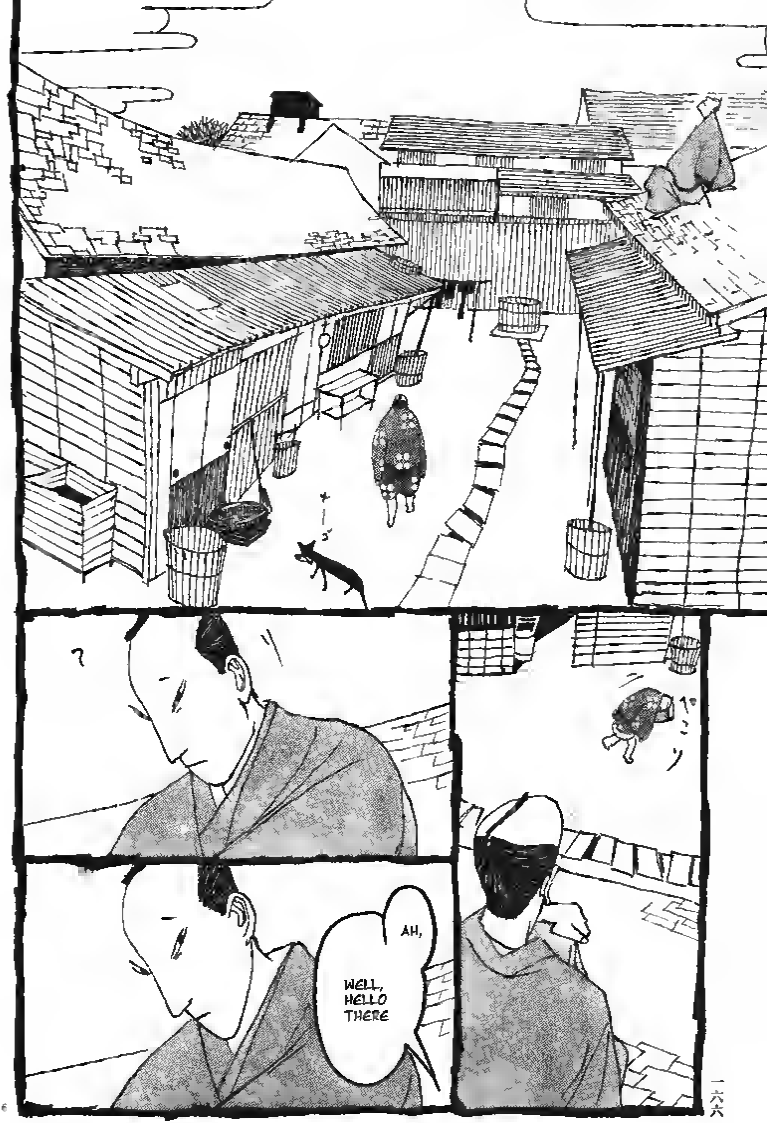
YOZAEMON MAY BE SATISFIED WITH HIS LIFE NOW AS A LAND OWNER, BUT THERE WAS A TIME WHEN HE WAS KNOWN AS THE HEAD DETECTIVE YOZAEMON.
TSUNEGOROU WAS ONE OF THESE PEOPLE.
THE TRUTH IS, IT WAS AN ACT OF TSUJIGIRI*
AND SO EVEN NOW, HIS FORMER FOLLOWERS COME SEEKING FOR HIS WISDOM AND ADVICE
SO TELL ME THE DETAILS
HMM
A CHILD? YOU REALLY MEAN TO TELL ME A MERE CHILD WAS KILLED?
THE VICTIMS WERE A MOTHER AND HER CHILD.

TL NOTE: TSUJIGIRI WAS WHERE A SAMURAI WOULD TEST THE SHARPNESS OF HIS BLADE ON SOME RANDOM PEASANT/PASSERBY

YES...AFTER SEARCHING THEIR BODIES, WE LEARNED THAT THEY WERE FROM TOMATSU VILLAGE. IT SEEMS THE ONE WHO KILLED THEM THREW THE CORPSES INTO THE KANDA RIVER.
SO SHE HAD BEEN SELLING HER BODY LATELY...
WELL ABOUT THAT... IT SEEMS THAT THE VICTIM'S HUSBAND PASSED AWAY AROUND A YEAR AGO AND SHE COULDN'T MAKE ENDS MEET...
WHAT DID THE GATE-KEEPER DO?
SO THE MURDERS HAPPENED AFTER THE NIGHT WATCHMEN PASSED BY...
BUT THE THING IS THAT IN THIS MONTH ALONE THERE HAVE BEEN 5 SIMILAR CASES THAT WE BELIEVE HAD BEEN PERPETRATED BY THE SAME KILLER...
POOR THING...
HER WORRIED CHILD SECRETLY FOLLOWED AFTER HIS MOTHER, WITHOUT CATCHING ATTENTION FROM THE GATEKEEPER
5 CASES?


STREET PERFORM-ERS AND THE LIKE. ALL THE SORT OF PEOPLE THAT THE COMMON FOLK WON'T CARE ABOUT IF THEY WENT MISSING
AND IN THOSE 5 CASES, THE VICTIMS WERE PEOPLE FROM THE HASHIKI REAR TENEMENTS...
SO THAT'S HIS ONLY MOTIVE?
THEIR CORPSES ALL LOOK LIKE THEY'VE BEEN TOYED AROUND WITH...
THE PAST 5 CASES AND THE 2 VICTIMS OF THIS MORNING...
I SEE THE CRIMINAL AS SOME SORT OF SICK SAMURAI WHO TAKES PLEASURE IN CUTTING PEOPLE UP
IT'S RATHER EMBARSSING...
YES... THAT'S THE ONLY THING THAT COMES TO MY MIND...

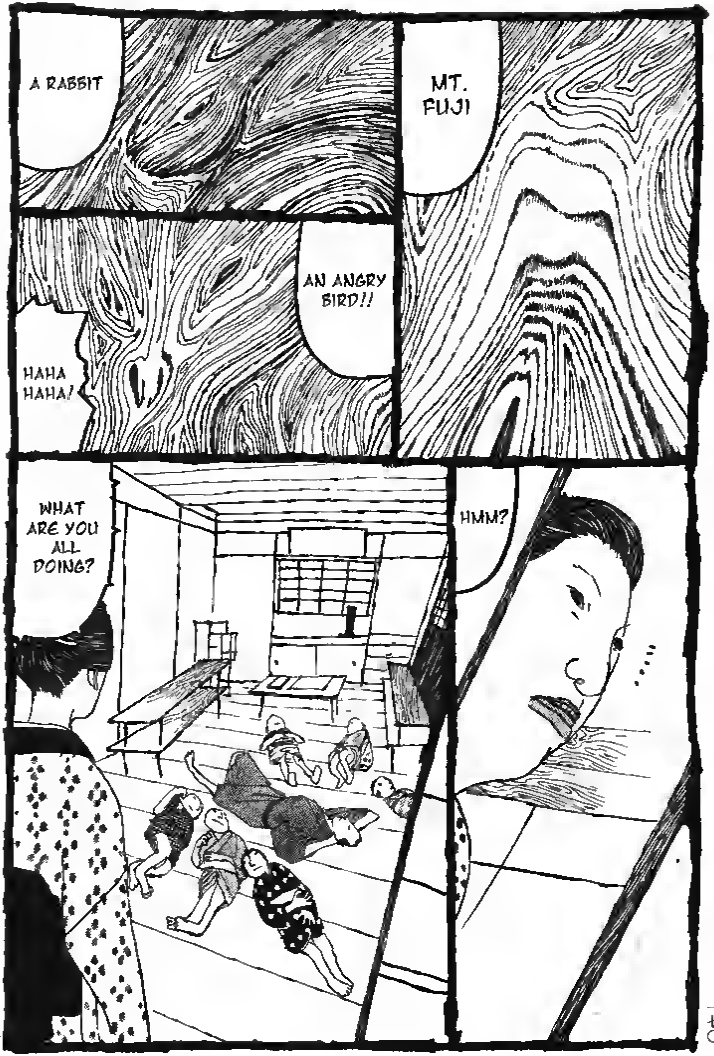

AZZ
YOU MEAN SENOUE
OH, BY THE WAY, I SAW THAT NEW TENANT OF YOURS,
HE'S A RATHER ODD ONE ISN'T HE.
I JUST SAW HIM ON THE ROOF JUST STARING AT THE SKY
HE DOESN'T COME FROM ANY CLAN HE'S JUST A RONIN
HMPH!
CLACK
WELL, SOME PEOPLE ARE JUST NATURALLY STRANGE
SO YOU'RE SUSPECTING HIM?
IN ANY CASE, THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO TALK TO ME...
DID HE REALIZE IT?
BUT HE LOOKS QUITE NICE, PLAYING WITH HIS NEIGHBOUR'S KID
DON'T START GETTING CRAZY IDEAS NOW
PLEASE TAKE CARE, SIR.
I'M SURE SOMEONE LIKE HIM NOW PLAYS WITH KIDS AND GETS TO BUY A SAD MASK BUT I NEVER MIND SO I NEVER MIND WHAT I SAID.
GO HOME.


?
AH,
WELL, HELLO THERE

A BLACK KITE AND A CROW...
AH, HELLO SIR.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON THE ROOF IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY?
HM?
IF YOU LOOK CAREFULLY, THEY FLY AT DIFFERENT HEIGHTS
MUST BE IN ORDER TO PREVENT ANY FIGHTS...
HOW CLEVER.
YOU NEED TO FIND SOME WORK

2 DAYS AFTER, THE LAND OWNER YOZAEMON WAS TAKING A BATH WITH THE LOCAL TUTOR HOGA. THE TWO WERE CHILDHOOD FRIENDS.
AH, SORRY FOR BRINGING IT UP
WHO KNOWS, IT'S JUST BEEN THE BASICS SO FAR..
SO HOW IS HE COMING ALONG?
TO PUT IT LIKE THAT..
IT'S ALRIGHT, I ALREADY HAD TOO MANY PUPILS TO DEAL WITH BY MYSELF
THANKS.
男
女
湯
湯
HAH
HAH

EXCUSE ME FOR BEING LATE!!
HEY, KAN.
HI!
A LOT OF BLACK ROCKFISH THIS YEAR.


A RABBIT
MT. FUJI
AN ANGRY BIRD!!
HAHA HAHA!
WHAT ARE YOU ALL DOING?
HMM?
....

WE'RE LOOKING AT THE KNOTS AND GRAIN OF THE WOODEN CEILING TO MAKE OUT SHAPES
IT'S A QUOTE FROM CONFUCIUS... MY FATHER ADMIRED HIS TEACHINGS VERY MUCH
"TO LEARN SOMETHING NEW AND THEN TO PUT IT INTO PRACTICE AT THE RIGHT TIME. IS THIS NOT A JOY?"
YOU SHOULDN'T BE ACTING LIKE THIS ON YOUR FIRST DAY NOW WAKE UP
HEE HEE
I SHALL LEARN AS WELL

"A YOUTH WHO AT HOME SHOULD BE FILIAL, AND ABROAD RESPECTFUL TO HIS ELDERS. HE SHOULD BE EARNEST AND TRUTHFUL. HE SHOULD OVERFLOW IN LOVE TO ALL AND CULTIVATE THE FRIENDSHIP OF THE GOOD. WHEN HE HAS TIME AND OPPORTUNITY AFTER THE PERFORMANCE OF THESE THINGS, HE SHOULD EMPLOY THEM IN POLITE STUDIES"
I LIVED WITHOUT ANY FRIENDS IN MY CHILDHOOD JUST THE THREE OF US, MY FATHER, MY MOTHER, AND I.
HE WAS A MAN WHO BELIEVED IN THE SWORD ABOVE ALL ELSE.
HE WAS A STRICT MAN
WHAT KIND OF A MAN WAS YOUR FATHER?
IT IS LIKE PASSING AWAY FROM THIS FLEETING WORLD YOZA.

SOMETIMES, I FEEL THAT I AM NO LONGER SOMEONE OF THIS WORLD
YOU SAID YOU CAME FROM SHINANO
DO YOUR PARENTS STILL LIVE THERE?
NO, THEY'VE PASSED ON TO THE NEXT WORLD
.....
I'VE LOST JUST ABOUT EVERY-THING NOW
AND SO I CAME TO EDO...

THE MOUNTAINS SHOULD BE STILL FULL OF GREEN TREES THIS TIME OF THE YEAR
HMM, LET ME THINK
HEY, HEY MISTER. WHAT'S THE PLACE YOU'RE FROM LIKE?
AND WITHIN THE FOREST, THE SUNLIGHT SEEPS IN THROUGH ALL THE BRANCHES
FALL
FALL
AH, THE SOUNDS OF THE TREE'S FRUITS FALLING
?
HAHA HAHA!
BONK
OWWW
はぁ

YOU ALL RESEMBLE THE NEW BUDS OF THE FOREST.
I'M GLAD I MET YOU ALL.

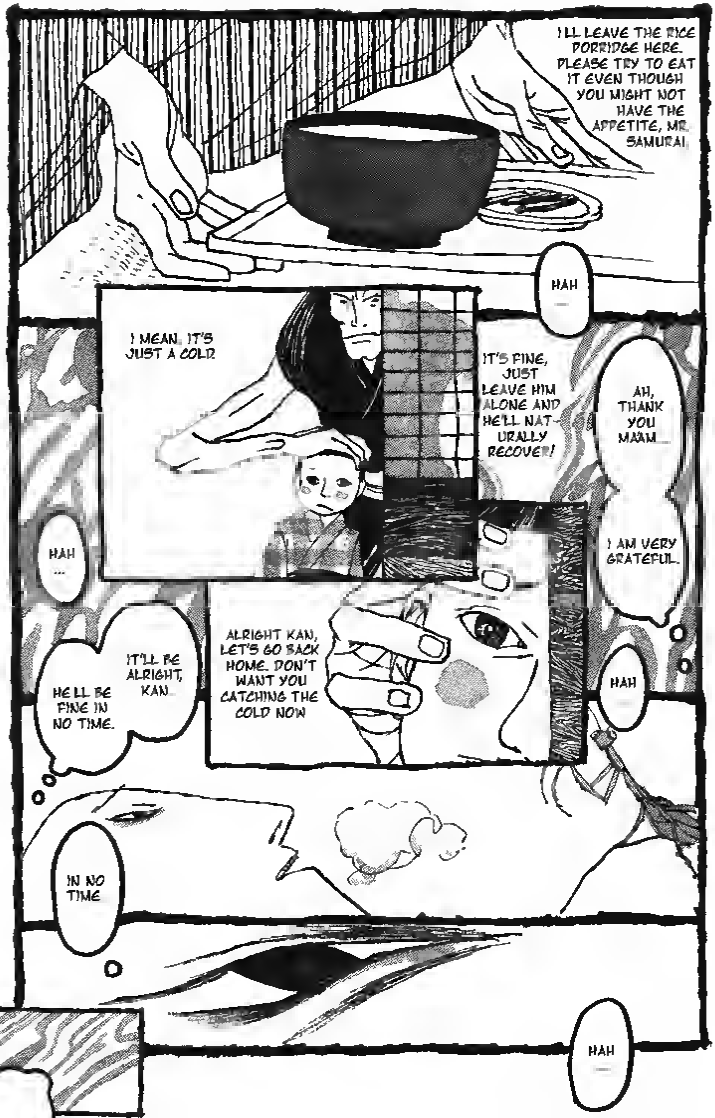
"TO LEARN SOMETHING NEW AND THEN TO PUT IT INTO PRACTICE AT THE RIGHT TIME. IS THIS NOT A JOY?"
SOUICHIROU WORKING AS THE NEW TEACHER TURNED OUT SURPRISINGLY WELL.
HMM?
CHECK-MATE.
CATS WILL SOON FALL ASLEEP WHEN THEIR STOMACHS ARE FULL.

LOOKS LIKE THESE SHORT SLEEVES ARE GOING TO BE TOO COLD FOR THE MORNINGS AND NIGHTS FROM NOW ON
TEE HEE
FUFU FUFU
THE FALL APPROACHES
THERE'S A COLD GOING AROUND SO YOU SHOULD TAKE CARE TOO
ZZZZ ZZ

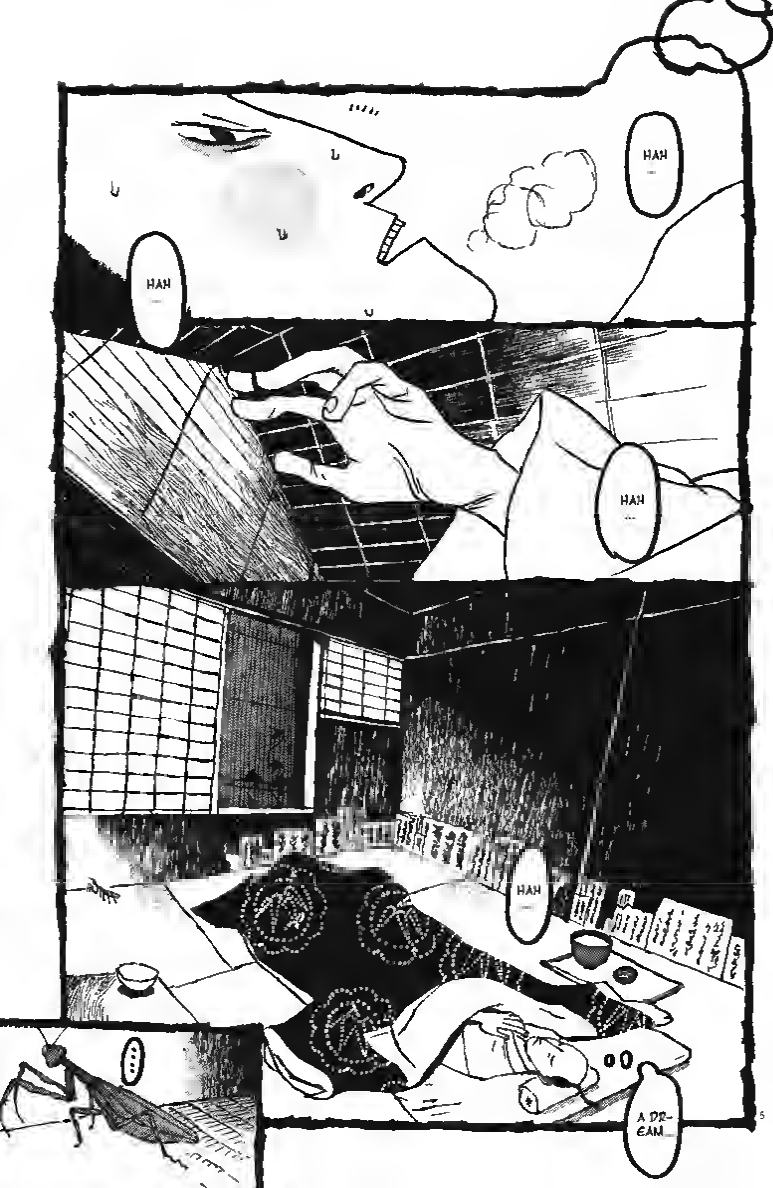
TRANSLATED BY HOX

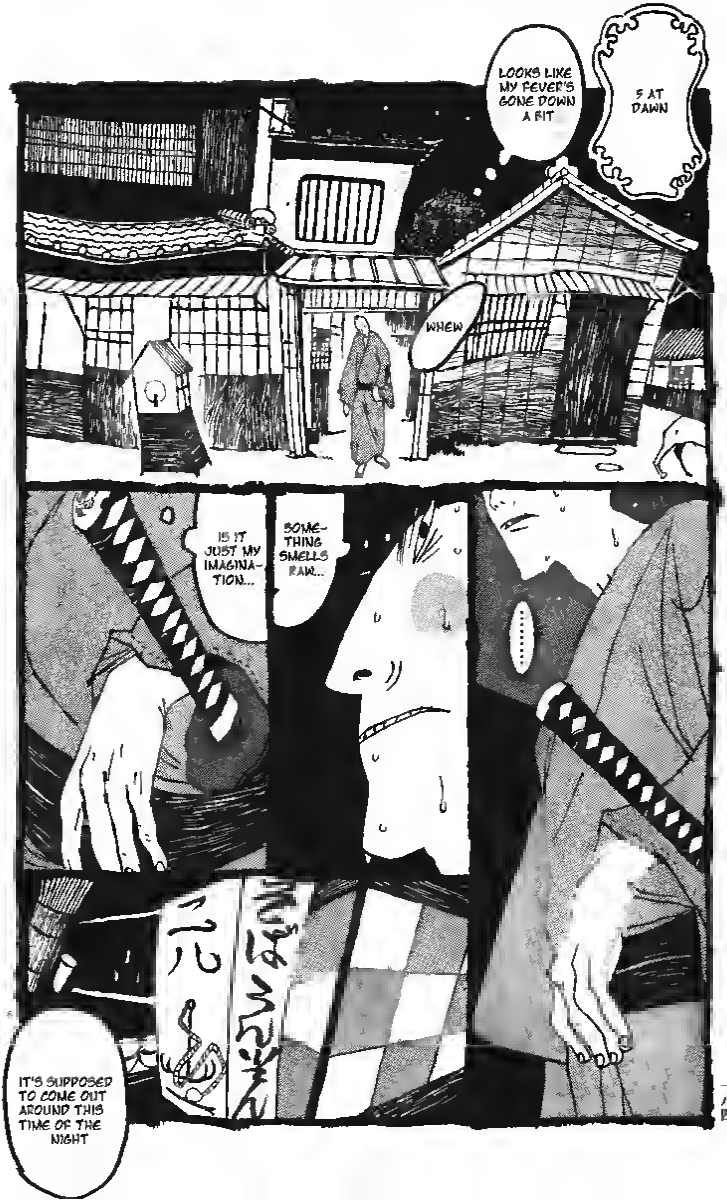
CHAPTER 10
THE THREAD OF LIFE

THE ROBUST SOUICHIROU
WHOSE BODY RARELY KNEW
SICKNESS WAS NOW LYING
IN BED AT THE MERCY OF
AN UNUSUALLY BAD COLD
HAH
A PRAYING MANTIS?
HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH
...
CLANG...


I'LL LEAVE THE RICE PORRIDGE HERE. PLEASE TRY TO EAT IT EVEN THOUGH YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE THE APPETITE, MR. SAMURAI.
HAH...
I MEAN, IT'S JUST A COLD.
IT'S FINE, JUST LEAVE HIM ALONE AND HE'LL NATURALLY RECOVER!
AH, THANK YOU MAAM...
I AM VERY GRATEFUL.
HAH...
ALRIGHT KAN, LET'S GO BACK HOME. DON'T WANT YOU CATCHING THE COLD NOW
HAH
IT'LL BE ALRIGHT, KAN.
HE'LL BE FINE IN NO TIME.
IN NO TIME
HAH...

YES, JUST LIKE THAT!
HOHO HOHO.
AHAHA HAHA!
HA HA HA
THIS IS FUN, VERY FUN!
YES, LIKE THAT, LIKE THAT.
HOHO HOHO
I DON'T HAVE TO WASTE TIME UNSHEATHING MY SWORD NOW

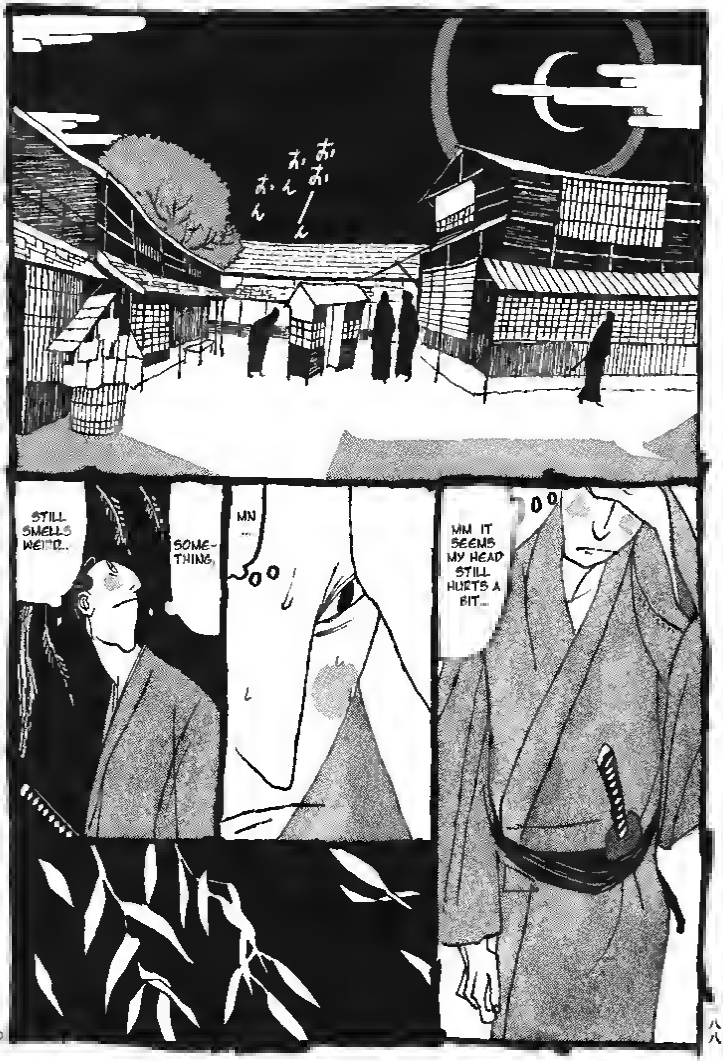

HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH
A DR-EAM


5 AT DAWN
LOOKS LIKE MY FEVER'S GONE DOWN A BIT
WHEW
SOMETHING SMELLS RAW...
IS IT JUST MY IMAGINATION...
IT'S SUPPOSED TO COME OUT AROUND THIS TIME OF THE NIGHT

AH THAT'S RIGHT, WEREN'T THEY ALSO TIED UP WITH A ROPE BY THAT KILLER?
WELL IT SEEMS LIKE IT'S THEIR GHOSTS
REMEMBER THAT MOM AND HER KID THAT WAS CUT DOWN BY THAT KILLER THE OTHER DAY?
HAHA, DOES SHE ASK THEM TO BUY HER?
AND SO I HEARD THAT THE GHOST OF THE MOTHER WALKS ALONE AT NIGHT ASKING A FAVOUR TO ANY SAMURAI SHE SEES
HMM...
WHAT A STORY...
SLURP
"PLEASE CUT DOWN MY CHILD AND I CLEANLY WITH ONE STROKE."
NO, SHE ASKS THEM TO CUT HER DOWN

WHOOSH
WHO WAS APPROACHED BY WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS SOME WOMAN, BUT WHEN SHE TOOK OFF HER FACE-TOWEL REVEALING HER DREADFUL FACE
AH, EXCUSE ME. I HAVE A REQUEST...
APPARENTLY THERE WAS ONE WARRIOR FROM SOME CLAN WHO WAS WALKING LATE AT NIGHT...
THE YOUNG MAN LET OUT A SCREAM,
WHA...
GAH!
HOW PITIFUL...
BUT THE GHOSTS CAUGHT AND DRAGGED HIM DOWN
AND TRIED HIS BEST TO RUN AWAY...
AGHHHH

AND THEN THE NEXT MORNING, THEY FOUND THE DEAD BODY OF THAT YOUNG MAN LEFT WITH ONLY A TERRIFIED EXPRESSION. THE THING IS, THE SUPPOSED YOUNG MAN'S FACE LOOKED LIKE THAT OF AN 80 YEAR OLD MAN.
AND THE WIND ON THAT NIGHT IS BLOWING EXACTLY LIKE IT IS TONIGHT
AHAHA, STOP. STOP YOU KNOW I DON'T LIKE THAT KIND OF CREEPY TALK
CLING
THANK YOU FOR THE MEAL.
YES, SIR
THANK YOU!


おおーんおんおん
MN IT SEEMS MY HEAD STILL HURTS A BIT...
MN...
SOME-THING
STILL SMELLS WEIRD..

.....
МАУБЄ...

MR... SAMURAI
PLEASE, A MOMENT
COULD YOU PLEASE...
SWOOSH
きりやあああ

あああ
PLEASE CUT US DOWN...
THIS CHILD IS CRYING FOR A MERCIFUL RELEASE INTO THE NEXT WORLD
あああ
WHAT UNSIGHTLY CUTS RECEIVED FROM A LONGSWORD...
あ

UNFORTUNATELY THE ONLY THING ON ME IS BUT A BAMBOO SWORD
STEP
SHING
BUT I SHALL DO SO WITH ALL THAT MY FATHER TAUGHT ME...
ナムアミダブツ、ナムアミダブツ、ナムアミダブツ

SHE'S SAYING A BUDDHIST CHANT NAMO AMITABHA BUDDHA

あ
あ
あ
YAHHH!

YOUR UNSIGHTLY SCARS HAVE NOW DISAPPEARED.

AND THEY PEACEFULLY ASCENDED TO THE AFTER-WORLD
HMM
BUT I THOUGHT GHOSTS DO BAD THINGS TO HUMANS AND HAUNT THEM
THESE WEREN'T GHOSTS OF THAT SORT
HA,
DON'T GO BELIEVING HIM, YOSHIBOU.
SOU'S ALWAYS GOING ON ABOUT SOME NONSENSE
BZZ
AH!

TRANSLATED BY HOX

槍持ち源次

やりもちげんじ

BONUS CHAPTER

THE SPEAR HANDLER GENJI

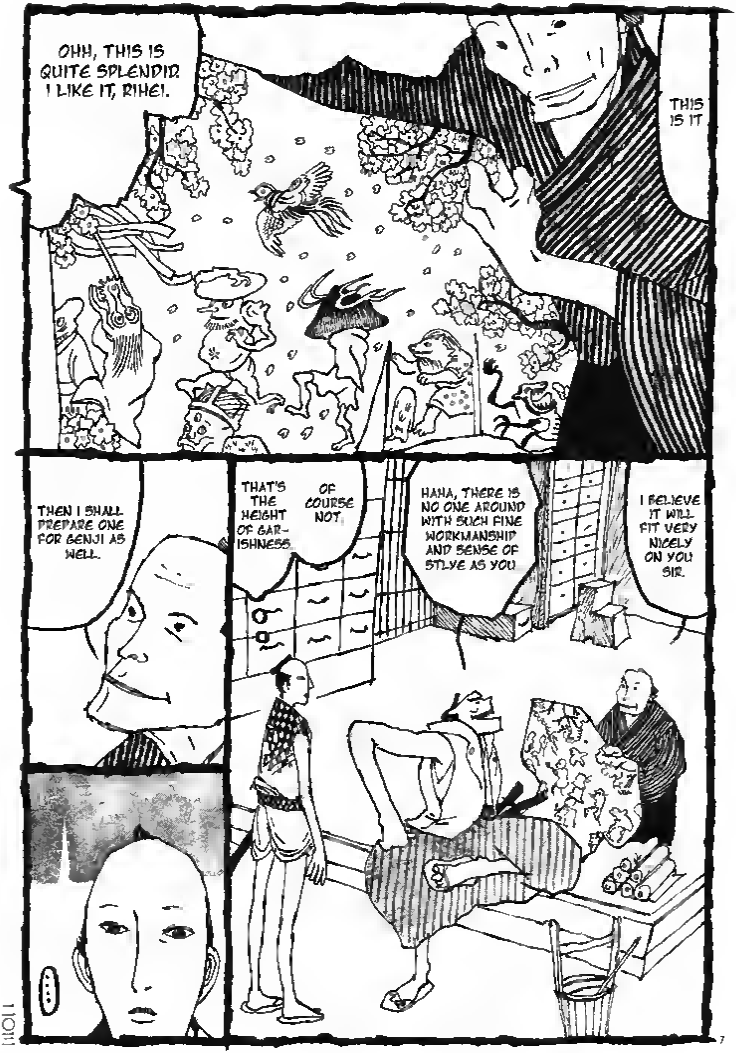
MAY WE CELEBRATE THE PEACEFUL TIMES, GENJI.
BUT WITH THE WINDS AS FIERCE AS THIS, THEY MIGHT ALL SCATTER BEFORE WE ARRIVE.

NUHAHAHA, HOW RIGHT YOU ARE!!
I'M SURE THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS WILL TRY THEIR BEST TO HANG ON THE BRANCHES UNTIL YOUR ARRIVAL SIR
HIS STUPID VOICE IS OVER-THE-TOP LOUD!!
WHAT A GUY
FU FU
FU FU
WHAT AN IDIOT MOMO!
CHECK OUT THAT GUY
HMPH

YOUR GLOOMY FACE IS SHOWING AGAIN
BUT THEIR JEERS, SIR...
HAH!
THE REMARKS OF DRUNKS, PAY NO HEED
I WONDER HOW THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS MUST LOOK RIGHT NOW.

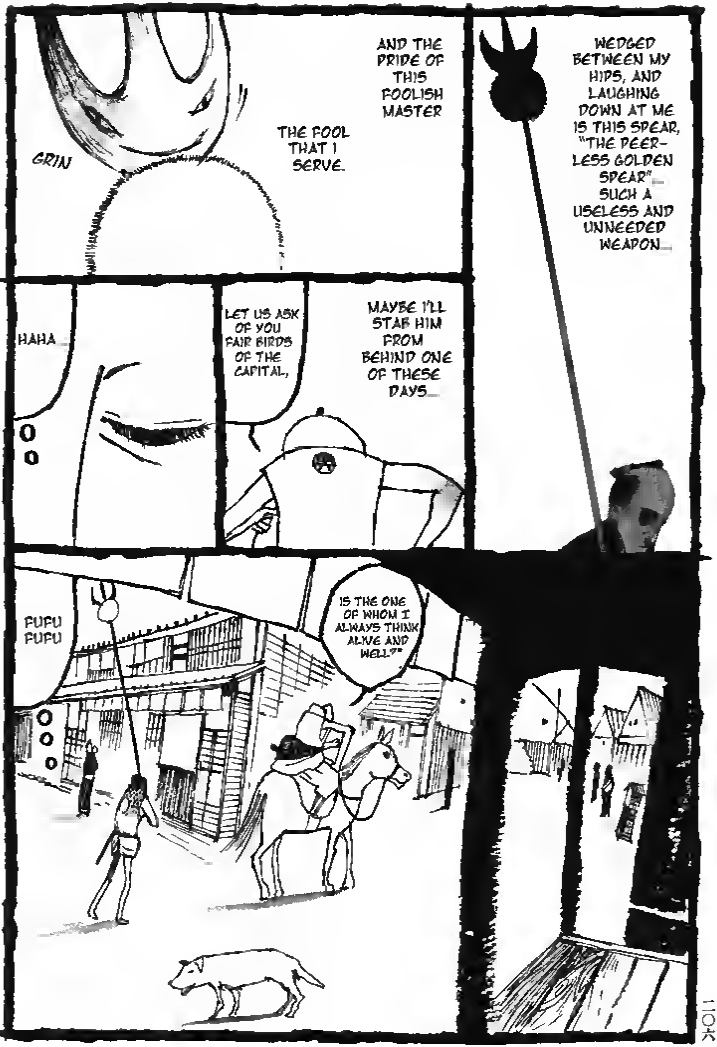
MIKOSHIDAIZABUROU TANETSUGI. HE WAS ONE OF THE THREE SONS OF THE MIKOSHI FAMILY, A SAMURAI FAMILY THAT SERVED AS THE UPPER VASSALS OF THE SHOGUN. ON THIS DAY HE, WITH HIS SPEAR HANDLER GENJI, WAS HEADING OUT FROM UENO'S KANEI-JI, ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS OF NIPPORI, TO SEE THE FAMOUS CHERRY BLOSSOMS OF OJI PARK OF ASUKAYAMA
IT'S THE MAGNI-FICENT MIKOSHI!
LOOK, LOOK! IT'S MIKOSHI!
PLEASE EXCUSE THEM FOR THEIR DISRESPECT-FUL REMARKS.
AHAHA!
COME ON, SHOW US THAT SPEAR OF YOURS!!
MIKOSHIDA-IZABUROU CARES NOT FOR SUCH PETTY MATTERS.
KIDS WILL BE KIDS

STOP
HE AIN'T WORTH YOUR TIME.
HE LOOKS LIKE SOME KID VISITING A FESTIVAL.
PSH, IT'S THAT MIKOSHI AGAIN.
オケラ
HM?
WE'LL STOP BY HERE, GENJI.
ぎゃーーーーー
ちこ


OHH, THIS IS QUITE SPLENDID. I LIKE IT, RIHEI.
THIS IS IT
I BELIEVE IT WILL FIT VERY NICELY ON YOU SIR.
HAHA, THERE IS NO ONE AROUND WITH SUCH FINE WORKMANSHIP AND SENSE OF STLYE AS YOU
OF COURSE NOT.
THAT'S THE HEIGHT OF BAR-ISHNESS
THEN I SHALL PREPARE ONE FOR GENJI AS WELL.

EVERYTIME AFTER THE USUAL STOP TO THAT SHOP, GENJI'S STOMACH FELT VERY UNWELL. AS IF HE HAD SWALLOWED LEAD, HIS STOMACH FELT HEAVY AND QUEASY.
MNN.
HM?
GENJI, DO YOU KNOW WHY I PURPOSELY MADE SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT?
IT IS BECAUSE YOU NEED THE APPROPRIATE DRESS (HAORI) FOR SUCH AN IMPORTANT VISIT.
WITH THAT, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO PROUDLY SHOW YOUR SPLENDID MANLY SELF TO THE FLOWERS.

AND BY YOUR SIDE WILL BE I, IN A MATCHING DRESS
GENJI
DAIZABUROU
GAHA HAHA!
AH...
HOW UNPLEASANT...


GRIN
THE FOOL THAT I SERVE.
AND THE PRIDE OF THIS FOOLISH MASTER
WEDGED BETWEEN MY HIPS, AND LAUGHING DOWN AT ME IS THIS SPEAR, "THE PEERLESS GOLDEN SPEAR"... SUCH A USELESS AND UNNEEDED WEAPON...
HAHA...
LET US ASK OF YOU FAIR BIRDS OF THE CAPITAL,
MAYBE I'LL STAB HIM FROM BEHIND ONE OF THESE DAYS...
PUPU PUPU
IS THE ONE OF WHOM I ALWAYS THINK ALIVE AND WELL?"

QUOTE FROM TALES OF ISE, BY ARIWARA NO NARIHARA

YOU THERE, WAIT.
HMM?
HM?
WE WERE WAITING FOR YOU, MIKOSHI DAIZA-BUROU.

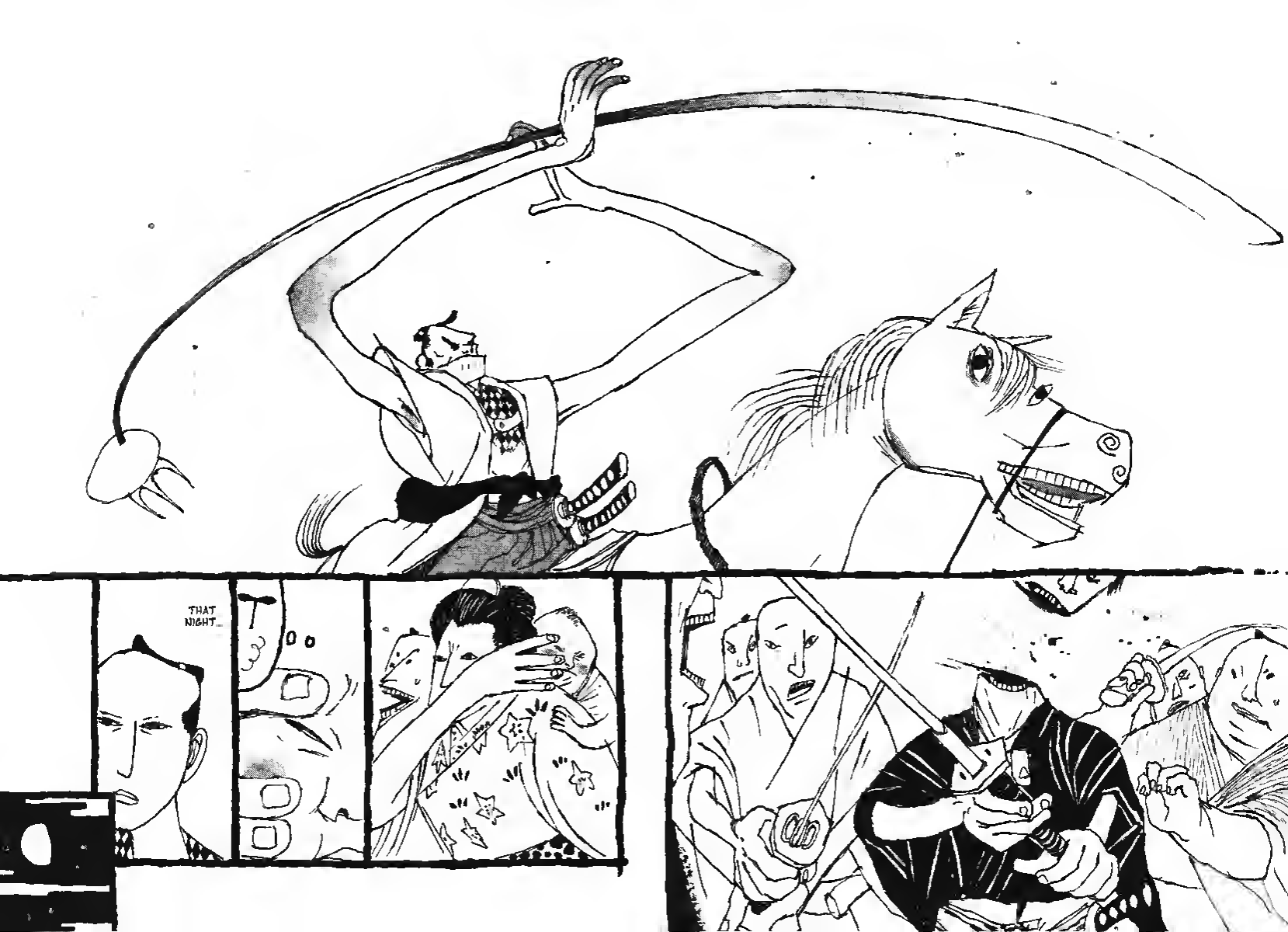
DON'T SAY THAT OUT OF ALL THINGS...!
ARE YOU AMBUSHING ME!?
HUH?
ME?
OUR MATTER ACTUALLY CONCERNS THAT DOG YOU KEEP WITH YOU.
YOSHIHARA?
YOU MOCKED US BACK IN YOSHIHARA, DID YOU NOT?
DON'T PLAY DUMB NOW

NOW COME HERE, YOU MUTT!
THAT DOG OF YOURS NEEDS SOME PROPER TRAINING PLEASE ALLOW US THAT PRIVILEGE.
NOW, WE'D LIKE YOU TO HAND OVER THAT SPEAR HANDLING DOG OF YOURS, SIR MIKOSHI
BUT MY FAMILY KEEPS NO DOGS AS SERVANTS, ONLY HUMANS
EVER SINCE YOU BEGAN THIS CONVERSATION, YOU'VE BEEN REFERRING TO MY SERVANT AS NOTHING BUT A DOG
I DO NOT HAVE TO FEED DANGO TO MY SERVANT AS MOMOTAROU* DOES.
NOW, DON'T EVER DARE TO CALL MY SPEAR HANDLER A MERE DOG AGAIN!

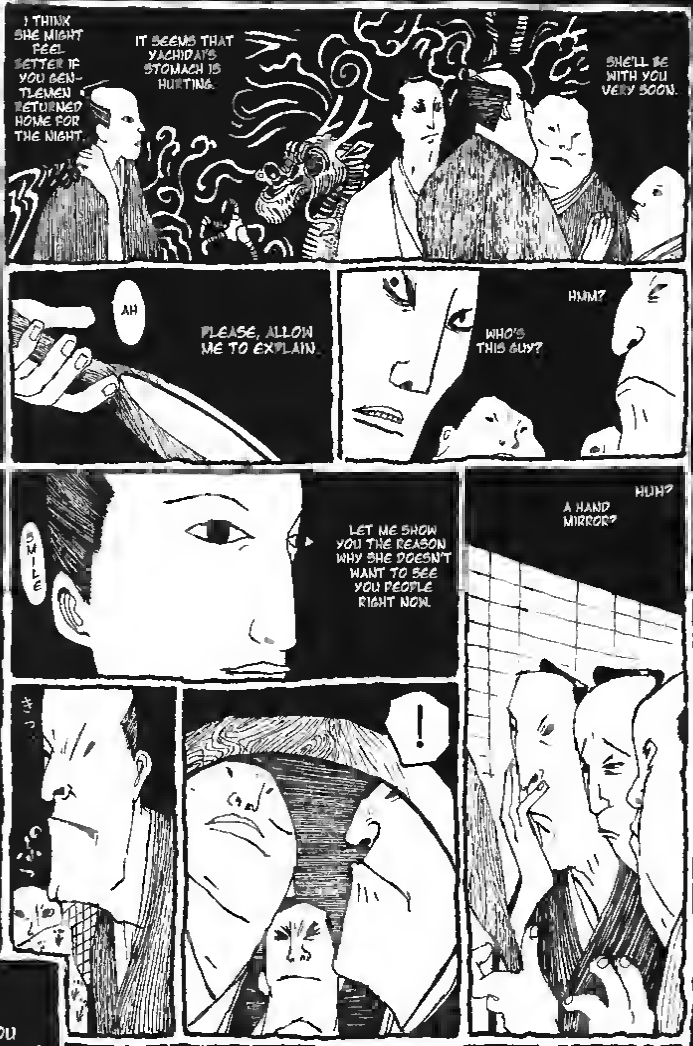
REFERENCE TO FAMOUS JAPANESE FOLKSTORY THAT HAS A DOG SERVANT.

BUT PART OF THE BLAME LIES WITH HIM FOR NOT RAISING HIS DOG PROPERLY
IT SEEMS THE MASTER CAN TALK THE TALK
ARE YOU DEFENDING HIM?
GIVE
THEN HE TOO..
HUH?
170

A TOY. JUST GOOGLE IT.

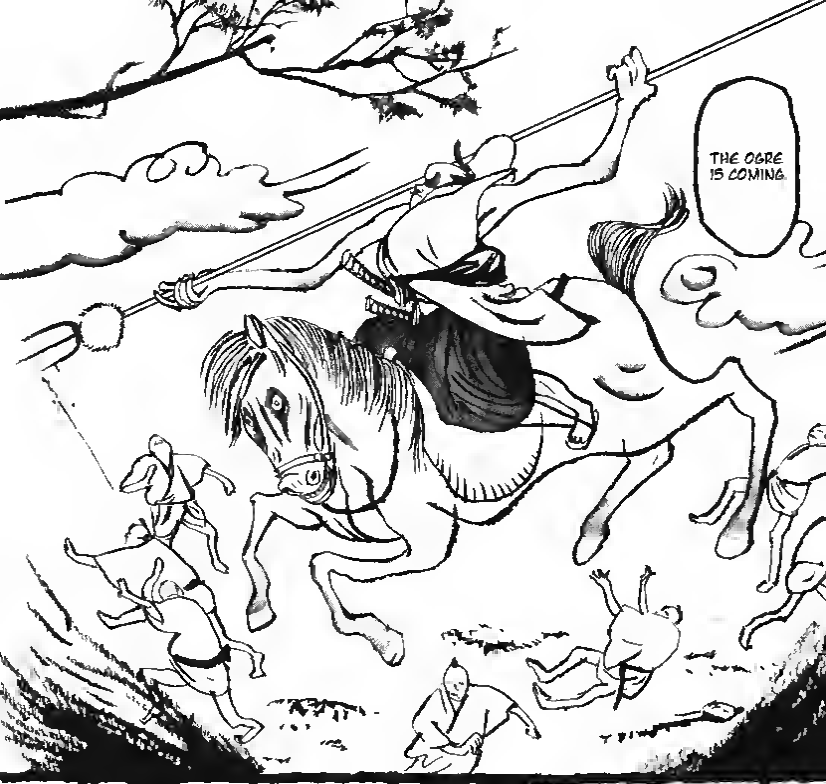

THAT NIGHT...

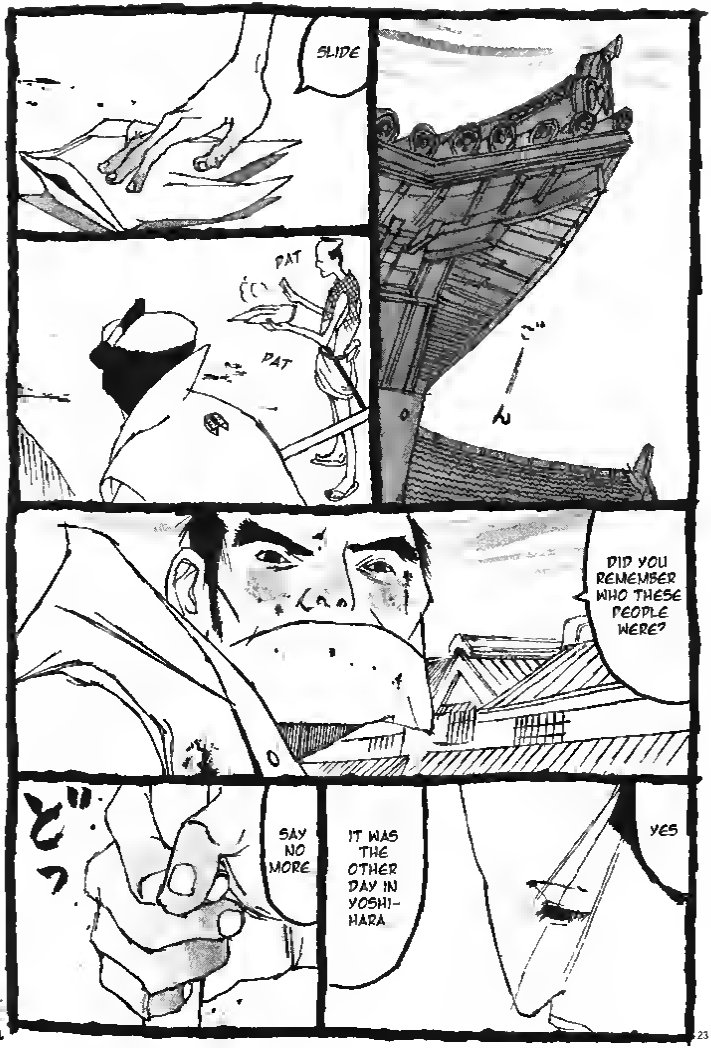
IT WAS WHEN ONO AND HIS GANG WERE MAKING A FUSS ABOUT WANTING TO SEE YACHIYO.
HAHA, ARE THE GUESTS YOUR CLOSE FRIENDS OR SOME-THING?
OF COURSE NOT THEY'RE NO DIFFERENT FROM BOORISH IDIOTS.
HMM.
HOW LONG ARE YA GONNA MAKE US WAIT?
THEY HAVE A FOUL TEMPER THAT MATCHES THEIR UGLY FACES

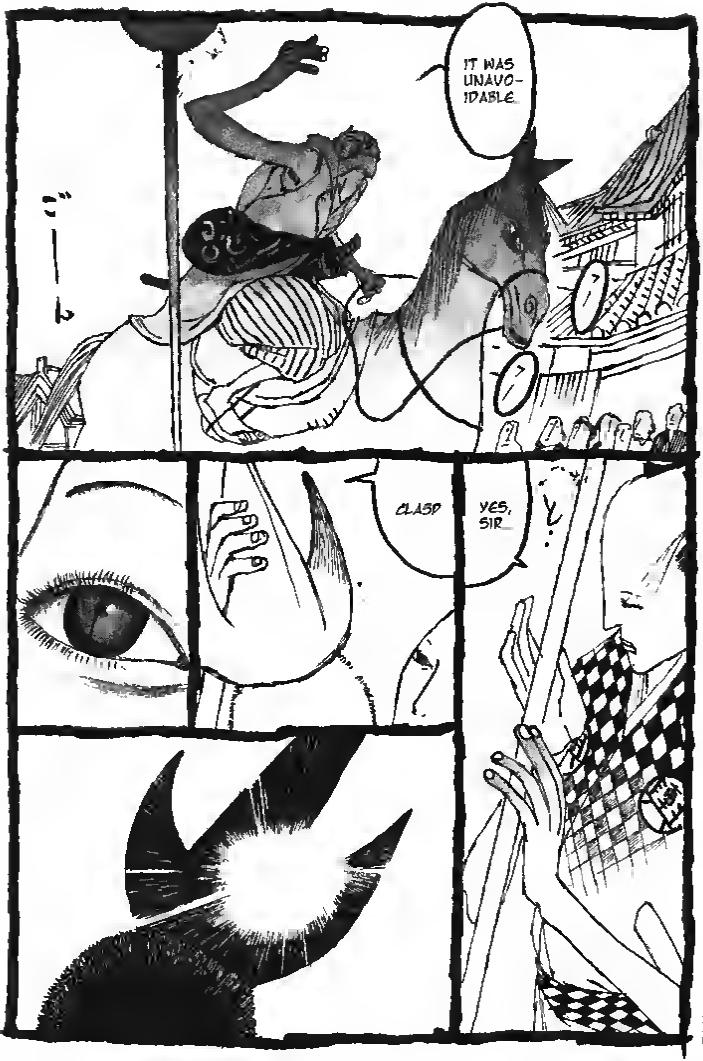

I THINK SHE MIGHT FEEL BETTER IF YOU GENTLEMEN RETURNED HOME FOR THE NIGHT.
IT SEEMS THAT YACHIDA'S STOMACH IS HURTING.
SHE'LL BE WITH YOU VERY SOON.
AH
PLEASE, ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN.
HMM?
WHO'S THIS GUY?
SMILE
LET ME SHOW YOU THE REASON WHY SHE DOESN'T WANT TO SEE YOU PEOPLE RIGHT NOW.
HUH?
A HAND MIRROR?
!
YOU BASTARD!

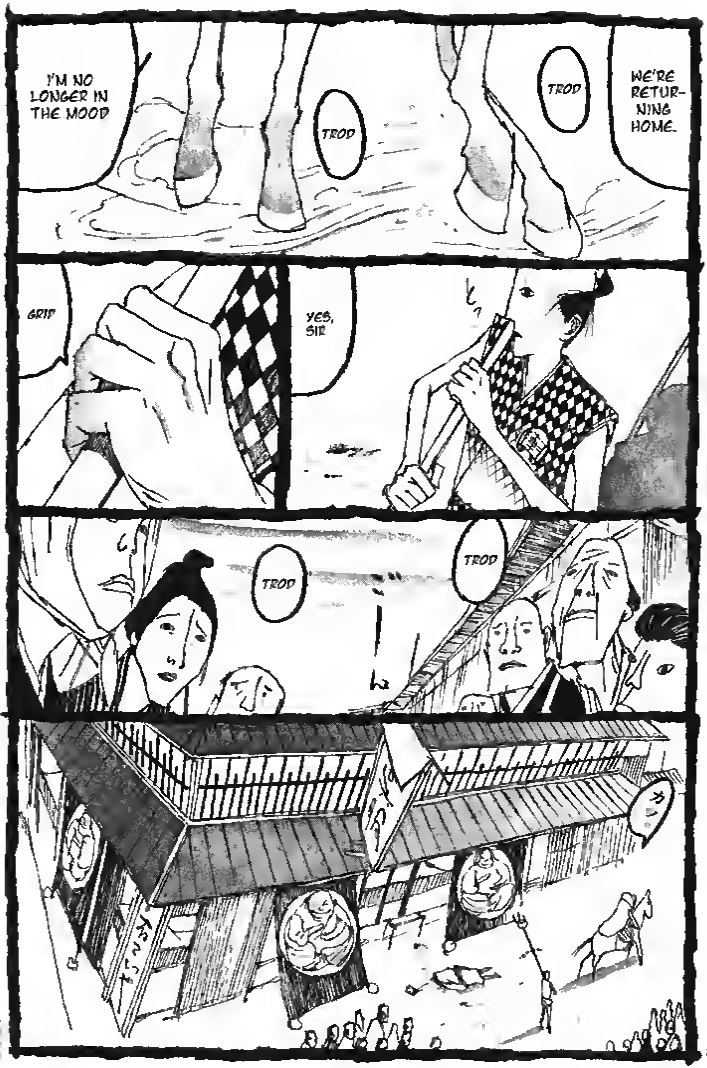
IT WAS THAT...
AGH
THE BOORISH IDIOTS!
CLANG
HOHO
FUFU FUFU
HEE HEE
AHAHAH HAHAHA

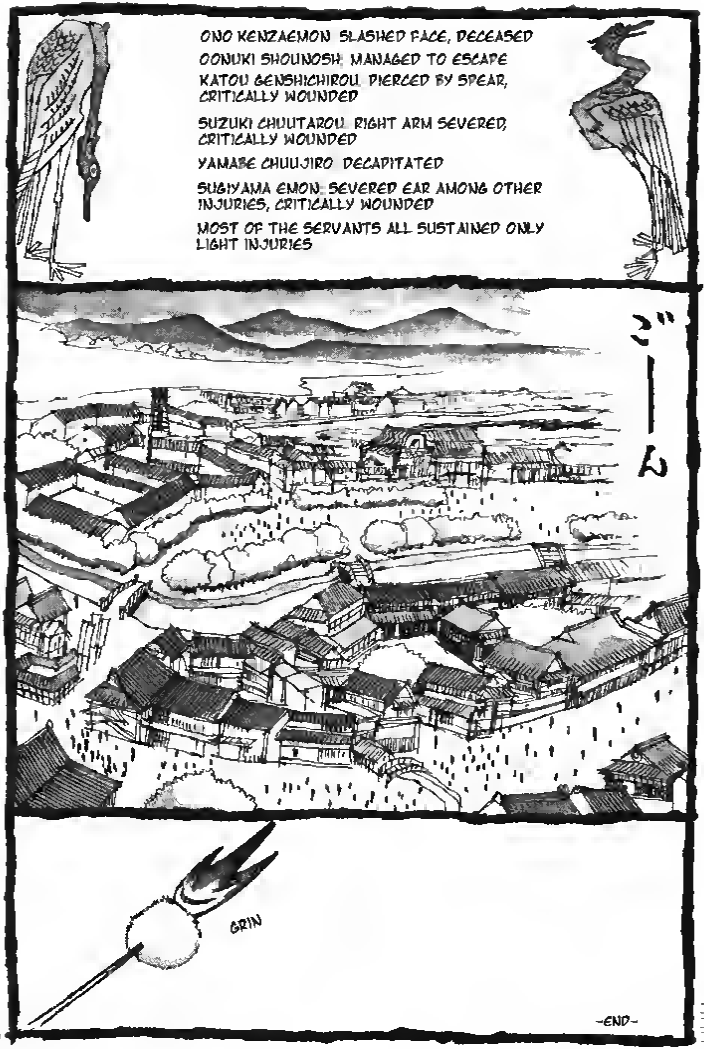
びゅ
た
IT'S AN OGRE, MOMMY


THE OGRE IS COMING.


SLIDE
PAT
PAT
DID YOU REMEMBER WHO THESE PEOPLE WERE?
YES
IT WAS THE OTHER DAY IN YOSHI-HARA
SAY NO MORE


IT WAS UNAVOIDABLE.
CLASP
YES, SIR.


I'M NO LONGER IN THE MOOD
TROD
TROD
WE'RE RETURNING HOME.
GRIP
YES, SIR
TROD
TROD


ONO KENZAEMON: SLASHED FACE, DECEASED
OONUKI SHOUNOSHI: MANAGED TO ESCAPE
KATOU GENSHICHIROU: PIERCED BY SPEAR, CRITICALLY WOUNDED
SUZUKI CHUUTAROU: RIGHT ARM SEVERED, CRITICALLY WOUNDED
YAMABE CHUUJIRO: DECAPITATED
SUGIYAMA EMON: SEVERED EAR AMONG OTHER INJURIES, CRITICALLY WOUNDED
MOST OF THE SERVANTS ALL SUSTAINED ONLY LIGHT INJURIES
ーン
GRIN
-END-

TRANSLATED BY HOX

第二集へつづく……

待つべし、待つべし。

BIG SPIRITS COMICS SPECIAL

竹光侍 ㊦

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